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THE FACTORY MOVEMENT

1830-1855

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BY

J. T. WARD

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TO MY PARENTS

PREFACE

IN his *History of the Factory Movement*, published in 1857, Samuel Kydd claimed that the Movement's 'efforts in the factories, on the platform, through the Press, the pulpit and the Parliament, called into existence almost every shade of controversy, religious, moral, social, economical, political, philosophical and Parliamentary'. The present book is an attempt to examine these controversies through a new history of the Movement. Although various aspects of the agitation for industrial reform have attracted the attention of historians, especially since the publication of the late Professor Cecil Driver's pioneer work, *Tory Radical, The Life of Richard Oastler*, the story of the Factory Movement itself has remained a comparatively neglected chapter of British history. This omission was perhaps natural, because of the widely scattered locations of the source material for a narrative in which 'national' and 'local' history are blended. But the very fact that parts of the agitation still arouse historical interest and, on occasion, controversy, may be some justification for presenting the first account of the whole Movement.

The period with which this chronicle deals strictly extends over the fourth to the sixth decade of the nineteenth century. But in the first chapter I have endeavoured to set the scene with a reminder of the industrial and legislative background, while in the last chapter the personalities, achievements and influence of the Movement are followed into later years. Through the body of the book, the need to consider the effects of other events and agitations has imposed a generally chronological pattern — which was, in any case, desirable, in order to trace the evolution of the Movement's ideas, policies and repute. As many speeches and writings would lose much of their vigour and emotion in paraphrase, direct quotation has been employed on many occasions. And because this is in many respects a strange story, which includes tours along several historical byways, I have indicated the sources used in

considerable detail; many of them are here quoted for the first time.

The basic research on which this book depends was undertaken during the tenure of a research studentship and the Charles Kingsley Bye-Fellowship, for which I am greatly indebted to the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College, Cambridge. For six years my work was supervised by Mr. F. R. Salter, O.B.E., formerly President of the College, for whose kindly and patient guidance I am deeply grateful.

During the preparation of the work I have been helped by many people, for whose kindness I must express my gratitude. Canon J. C. Gill of Finedon has been a most considerate and helpful friend, sharing with me information which he collected for his books on G. S. Bull. The late Colonel G. W. Ferrand, O.B.E., and Mrs. Ferrand were very liberal hosts on several occasions and gave me full access to the important papers of W. B. Ferrand. Professor David Owen of Harvard University generously gave me his transcripts of the Fielden papers, and Detective Inspector A. G. Rose was equally helpful with transcripts of various Home Office and other papers. My cousin, Mr. Mark Towers, provided generous hospitality and help on various matters.

I must also acknowledge my indebtedness for other papers, information and advice to the late Mr. Strafford Lucas, Colonel S. H. Ferrand, D.S.O., M.C., Mr. D. F. Ferrand, Canon Richard Earley, Miss G. M. Phillips, Dr. G. S. R. Kitson Clark of Trinity College, Cambridge, the late Rt. Hon. Arthur Greenwood, Mr. J. Lupton, Mr. E. E. Dodd, Mr. J. J. Bagley, Dr. F. C. Pritchard, Miss Anne Lucas, the late Mr. T. A. Riley, Dr. W. H. Chaloner and Dr. Alexander Wilson of Manchester University, Miss Anne Brereton, Mr. Frank Beckwith of the Leeds Library, Mr. W. Robertshaw, Professor Asa Briggs of Sussex University, Mr. Mark Blaug of Yale University, Colonel R. J. P. Warde-Aldam, T.D., and to Professor D. F. Macdonald, Mr. S. G. E. Lythe and Dr. D. G. Southgate of Queen's College, Dundee.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Southgate also for his invaluable help in the preparation of the index.

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Much of the information on which this book is based was obtained from library collections, and I have to acknowledge the kindness and help of many librarians and their staffs. In particular, I am indebted to Mr. H. Bilton and Mr. J. Macdonald of Bradford, Mr. G. F. Foster of Ashton-under-Lyne, Mr. F. G. B. Hutchings of Leeds, Mr. F. Taylor of Keighley, Mr. S. Horrocks and Mr. H. Smith of Manchester, Mr. F. W. Smith of Dewsbury, Mr. H. H. Hamer of Bolton, Mr. H. Goulden of Huddersfield, Mr. F. C. Pritchard of Halifax, Mr. H. J. P. Pafford, Miss Canney and Miss Spurrell of the Goldsmiths' Library at London University, Mr. E. Taylor of Rochdale, Miss T. Simpson of Oldham, Mr. E. Bletcher of Derby, Mr. P. Chadwick of Bury, Mr. J. H. Lindsay of Todmorden, Mr. J. Stuffins of Harrogate, Mr. B. Oliph Smith of Wakefield, Miss D. Basleigh of Knaresborough, Mr. J. P. Lamb of Sheffield, Miss J. A. Downton of Preston, Mr. J. Lockwood of Bingley, Mr. C. W. Black of Glasgow, Mr. A. N. Cass of Queen's College, Dundee, Mr. C. S. Minto of Edinburgh, Mr. M. K. Milne and Mr. E. A. Ward of Aberdeen, Miss C. R. McEwan and Mr. J. F. Hamilton of Paisley, Mr. A. Small of Dundee, Miss A. Foster of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, the curators of the Tolson Memorial Museum at Huddersfield and the Cartwright Memorial Museum at Bradford, and the staffs of the Institute of Historical Research, Cambridge University Library, the British Museum and the Stockport Library.

Finally, I am indebted to my wife, who has helped in very many ways, not least by her tolerance and kindness over the long period during which the book was written.

J. T. WARD

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CHAPTER ONE

THE BACKGROUND AND THE PROBLEM

THE movement to regulate industrial working conditions began in the textile towns of Northern England and in the rugged Pennine villages between them. Here, where Cistercian ruins bore witness to the ancient wealth of wool, the eighteenth-century entrepreneurs gradually concentrated their great textile industries, the first targets for the reformers. Although the cause was ultimately decided at Westminster, the reformers' ideals and ideas were created and moulded by Northern experience and environment. Their leaders remembered something of an earlier age; they were influenced by having witnessed the destruction of historic hierarchies and age-old crafts, the extension of sedate market towns into sprawling slums and the rise of new forms of wealth and power. Consequently, the Factory Movement was permanently influenced by the events which preceded and provoked its emergence; its genealogy is to be sought in the Industrial Revolution.

I

The early eighteenth-century woollen industry was firmly established in traditional centres, buttressed by statutory benevolence and ancient prestige as the basis of a mercantilist economy. Its history in the Industrial Revolution is a record of increasing concentration and specialisation in areas of the West Riding of Yorkshire. During the century such enterprising squires as Lord Irwin at Halifax and Leeds and Sir John Ramsden at Huddersfield erected market halls, soon followed by merchant groups in Wakefield, Leeds, Bradford, Gomersal, Colne and Halifax. These marvels to contemporary chroniclers played important civic and industrial roles.¹ They served wide areas of 'domestic' industry; in 1727 Defoe noted cloth tents outside almost every house in the bustling Halifax district.²

The domestic industry was mainly composed of small clothiers employing their families and neighbouring spinsters. Some specialisation already existed: the woolcombers, Defoe noted, were 'a particular set of people'.³ Woven cloth, rinsed in urine, was cleansed by other specialists, the valley fulling millers, before sale to town merchants, who organised the 'finishing' by skilled croppers. Market-centres developed ill-defined individual traditions. And the number of spinners needed to supply a single weaver led to masters putting out material over wide districts. Halifax men sent much work to Lancashire, and Norwich wool was spun even in Westmorland.

Domestic clothiers' conditions have been variously described. Later generations of factory workers imagined golden ages of prosperous independence, and Friedrich Engels 'established' the legend of contented rural bliss: ⁴

the workers enjoyed a comfortable and peaceful existence. . . . They were not forced to work excessive hours; they themselves fixed the length of their working day, and still earned enough for their needs. . . . Children grew up in the open air of the countryside, and if they were old enough to help their parents work, this was only an occasional employment, and there was no question of an 8 or 12 hour day. . . .

But work was often long and arduous in the cottage industries; and sales often involved long walks to market. One James Beardsall of Holme

used to relate having gone to Huddersfield market for 13 weeks successively without selling a piece, after which he . . . took two pieces . . . to Stockport . . . but, not succeeding there, he went on to Manchester. . . .

Knaresborough men took their pieces to Leeds; and Joshua Fielden of Todmorden walked 24 miles to Halifax every week.⁵

Weavers' homes were not the utopias pictured by later sentimentalists; and the weavers were always 'divided . . . into two very different classes . . . being landowners or entirely dependent upon weaving'. Their children often worked long hours. 'Soon after I was able to walk', recalled George Crompton, 'I was employed in the cotton manufacture.' An old man told Cooke Taylor in 1842 that children worked 'as

soon as they could crawl, and their parents were the hardest of taskmasters'. Child labour in Lancashire, alleged Cooke Taylor, 'was at its worst and greatest height before anybody thought of a factory'.⁶

Eighteenth-century Lancashire witnessed the spectacular rise of the small cotton industry into the nation's greatest exporting business. This revolution was largely accomplished by a series of famous inventions. John Kay's Flying Shuttle of 1733 increased the old shortage of spinners, and infuriated weavers drove Kay from Bury and Colchester. But spinning inventions soon redressed the balance.⁷ John Wyatt and Lewis Paul's spinning roller of 1738 failed, but between 1764 and 1767 James Hargreaves of Blackburn constructed his Spinning Jenny, of which some 20,000 models were working by 1788. The workers' hostility declined, as they bought jennies and substantially increased production and earnings. Further machines were developed by Paul, John Lees of Manchester and Richard Arkwright, a Preston barber; and in 1779 Samuel Crompton of Bolton produced his celebrated Spinning Mule, which greatly increased production, especially of fine muslins. While workers' opposition rose again, the mule made many fortunes — though not for Crompton.⁸ But a golden age opened for the weavers: from 1788, 'new weavers' cottages with loom-shops rose in every direction, all immediately filled'. John Singleton reported from Wigan in 1799 that 'were it possible to make one weaver into two weavers, they might be employed'.⁹ In the century from 1701, raw cotton imports rose from 1,985,868 pounds to 56,010,732, and the value of exports from £24,000 to £5,851,000.¹⁰

Thomas Lombe's Derby silk mill of 1717 was a model for subsequent development. After Lombe's patent lapsed in 1732, silk mills using his machinery were constructed through the Midlands and Cheshire, often adapting ancient corn mills; and the expanding cotton industry established riverside spinning mills. A Blackburn yeoman, Robert Peel, had a calico factory in the 'sixties and later built three Burton mills.¹¹ Arkwright's famous Cromford mills opened in 1771, and in partnership with Jedediah Strutt of Nottingham he established almost complete control over cotton prices; he was knighted in 1786 and bought large Derbyshire estates.¹² In twenty years the number of mills

rose from about 20 to 150; the Manchester district, with two mills in 1782, had 99 in 1830. Mills opened at Chorley, Stalybridge and Oldham in 1776, Preston in 1777, Mossley in 1778, Bolton in 1780, Stockport in 1782, Droylsden and Ashton in 1785, Todmorden in 1786, Styal, Warrington and Mellor in 1787 and Rochdale about 1790. In 1795 Dr. John Aikin estimated that the Lancashire cotton industry employed some 350,000 workers; there were then nearly 100 mills on the Tame, within ten miles of Ashton.¹³ And cotton not only drove woollen and linen production from Lancashire, but itself extended. Arkwright helped to establish a cotton mill at Keighley in 1780, and his first partner, John Smalley, took the industry to Holywell in Flintshire, in 1777. Cotton mills were erected at Skipton in 1784, Brighouse in 1800, Bingley in 1801 and at Huddersfield; and Bradford spinners were employed by Manchester manufacturers from the 1780's.¹⁴ In 1787 there were 19 mills in Scotland, and by 1834, 125. David Dale founded the great New Lanark mills in 1786; James Monteith established the Glasgow muslin industry at Blantyre; and James Finlay, aided by his nephew, Archibald Buchanan, started another great family firm. Dale, Monteith and Finlay had all been weavers and merchants.¹⁵

In 1784 Edmund Cartwright, a Lincolnshire rector holidaying at Matlock, met some Manchester manufacturers who explained their urgent need of weaving machinery to utilise the increased yarn production. Vaucanson's loom of 1765 had failed, but in 1785 Cartwright tested his first loom — powered by a bull — at Doncaster. In the latter year, a Watt engine was installed at Papplewick mill near Nottingham. The use of steam power rapidly grew, but weaving machinery developed slowly. Radcliffe and Horrocks constructed power looms in 1803, but only 2000 such machines were used by 1813. After Waterloo, however, progress was rapid. In 1829 English weavers used over 45,000 power looms. Six years later there were 683 cotton mills in Lancashire, and 1262 in the United Kingdom.¹⁶ Power weaving had provided the climax to the Industrial Revolution in cotton.

The industry's rise involved great social changes, as a new race of wealthy industrial dynasties appeared. Joshua Fielden, a Quaker Tory, changed from woollen to cotton production in

1783, establishing a Todmorden business later made famous by his Radical sons. Samuel Greg, a Belfast shipowner's son, founded his Styal factory estate in 1784, and the tradesman Samuel Oldknow built the Mellor estate in 1793. The Quaker Tory John Horrocks built five Preston factories between 1796 and 1802; James McConnell and John Kennedy founded their famous Manchester firm in 1797; and Henry Marsland and Henry Sudell established the industry in Stockport and Blackburn. Dale's son-in-law, Robert Owen, managed the Chorlton mills from 1789 and bought New Lanark ten years later. William and Richard Potter founded their great Manchester warehouses in 1802, soon to be followed by other merchants. Jacob Bright opened his little Rochdale mill in 1809.¹⁷ Spurring all was the memory of Arkwright's meteoric rise to wealth. By 1811 Crompton listed a total of 573 cotton concerns in Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire.¹⁸ The leaders of the new industry were predominantly nonconformist liberals, increasingly interested in free trade, as their need for protection diminished. From 1815 they opposed the Corn Laws, and in 1821 founded their organ, the *Manchester Guardian*.

But machinery was only introduced against strong opposition. Blackburn workers rioted in 1764 and 1769, and in 1779 mobs smashed machines in several towns. Local opinion often supported the workmen, but a Parliamentary Committee reported in 1780 that without the inventions, 'the Cotton Manufacture . . . must have sunk'. Sir George Savile's West Riding militia and regular troops garrisoned the cotton towns, as magistrates feared 'the prejudices of the poor in general against the use of the Water Machines'. Two Manchester magistrates reported in 1791 that ¹⁹

the introduction of machinery to abridge labour in weaving was a subject, at that time, of peculiar disgust and jealousy.

A Manchester mill was burned down in 1792, and sporadic rioting long continued. The Nottinghamshire framework-knitters' Luddite risings spread to the cotton districts in 1812. Stockport men collected funds in February, and food riots were followed in April by machine-wrecking. Riots occurred at Stockport, Oldham, Macclesfield, Middleton and elsewhere, and a Westhoughton factory was destroyed. 'There was in

reality . . . a violent prejudice against machinery', explained the sympathetic Dr. Robert Taylor of Bolton; and 'many of the poor manufacturers were more than half starved'. But the leaders were tried in May at Chester and Lancaster: 10 were hanged and 17 transported.²⁰ There were occasional later outbursts, especially in 1826, but proletarian interest generally moved elsewhere.

Even domestic industry had witnessed the rise of trade clubs, often merely convivial groups but sometimes embryonic friendly societies, which could on occasion organise 'industrial action'; there were large strikes in 1758. Spinners' unions from several towns attempted a federation in 1792, and weavers from thirteen districts amalgamated in 1799. The Combination Acts appear to have been lightly applied, although Manchester masters condemned their operatives' 'wicked and dangerous' combination in 1803. Union action was militant and regular. Preston weavers struck in 1808, 1818 and 1821, and the spinners organised widespread strikes in 1808 and 1810 for the 'equalisation' of wages to Manchester rates. In 1818 Stockport men started a general strike and a general union, the 'Philanthropic Society'; but the organisation soon fell, as troops broke its meetings and its treasurer absconded — a sadly regular occurrence in union history. Nevertheless, local unionism continued. The weavers organised concerted strikes in 1818, which failed with the imprisonment of their leaders. Rochdale weavers gained 'price lists' in 1819 and 1824, and struck in 1827, and Hyde spinners left work in 1824. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce insisted that²¹

combinations, whether of masters or workmen, produce a hostile feeling . . . directly opposed to the best interests of society.

But after the repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824, Lancashire led union development. The general introduction of power looms after 1822 and the slump of 1825 provoked further machine-wrecking in 1826. The movement failed, and the weavers, now the 'most wretched body of people' in Lancashire, were censured by the spinners' versatile secretary, John Doherty, who planned another general union in 1828. Stockport workers started another strike wave in January 1829, but starvation drove the unionists back in September. This failure was

followed by Doherty's 'Grand General Union of Operative Spinners', the forerunner of the grandiose organisations of the 'thirties and Lancashire's greatest contribution to early union history.²²

The cotton weavers also periodically supported pleas for statutory minimum wages, as advocated by Whitbread in 1795. Their petitions gained inoperative Arbitration Acts in 1800 and 1804; and Bolton masters supported them in 1805. But Parliamentary Committees opposed such legislation in 1808 and 1809. When petitioning failed, the weavers rioted and their leader, Colonel Joseph Hansom, was imprisoned. The repeal of Elizabethan wage-fixing statutes in 1813 was a bitter blow, but campaigning continued periodically, with considerable public support. The Rev. William Hay of Manchester reported that masters paid such low wages that the Poor Rate 'served as a bonus to the Capital employed'. Henry Hobhouse was sorry to find that 'some intelligent persons' believed that the weavers 'had just cause of complaint'. Hay alleged that the employers 'might raise wages considerably with their own profits', and Thomas Ainsworth, a ruined manufacturer, asserted that

it was now a trade of oppression, demi-swindling and deception : a master could not live by the honest pursuit of Trade, nor could a weaver by hard labour.

The adoption of the weavers' demands by Fielden's son John, in 1826, ensured the continuance of the cause.²³

Some weavers turned to political action, through Samuel Bamford's Hampden Clubs and John Knight's Oldham Union Society, advocating universal male suffrage, annual Parliaments and equal electoral districts. But the unstable post-war conditions produced various policies. In 1817 the 'Blanketeers' pathetically marched to petition the Prince Regent, and Jeremiah Brandreth's tragi-comic 'Pentrich Revolution' promised rum and beef to starving stockingers. The suspected Jacobinism of the Radical fraternities provoked repressive legislation in 1817 and 1819, and the authorities' widespread use of spies. In 1819 some 60,000 workers, gathered in carnival fashion on S. Peter's Fields at Manchester, were charged by the Yeomanry, seeking to arrest the speaker, Henry Hunt. After this 'Peterloo' tragedy, in which eleven people were killed, proletarian bitterness

mounted.²⁴ Above all, the 'establishment' of bourgeoisie and proletariat, the distinction between the power of Property accepting a *laissez-faire* creed and the herded masses of the slums, and the cycles of capitalist slump and boom caused social tensions which were to influence much subsequent political and social history.

II

The Industrial Revolution advanced more slowly in the woollen industry. Kay's shuttle and Hargreave's jenny were widely adopted, and Yorkshire broadcloth production rose from 34,000 pieces annually in the 1730's to 229,000 in the 'nineties; but industrial organisation long remained largely 'domestic', as Wilberforce claimed in 1800. Nevertheless, the scene was changing: merchants became manufacturers and ancient fulling mills were converted into scribbling mills and the centres of riverside industry. There were 100 water mills in Halifax parish by 1775, when 'in Halifax, Bradford and Leeds the coarse cloth manufacture was never known in a better state'.²⁵ After a mid-century 'golden age', the Norfolk worsted industry started to decline: 'the fact is', observed Arthur Young, in 1788, 'Yorkshire undersells Norwich'. East Anglia's fall was hastened by the French wars and the weavers' opposition to change: 'for anyone . . . to attempt to set up machinery in Norfolk was to venture his life'. Yorkshire's fast streams and ample coal assisted the worsted industry's move to Halifax and Bradford.²⁶ And long-standing disputes over outworkers' embezzlements led to the establishment of the Worsted Committee in 1777 and encouraged masters to establish well-supervised factories.

The first woollen factory was built at Mirfield in 1779, and within twenty years 40 were working. Wesley's friends, William and John Whitacre, built Woodhouse Mills around 1780, and Holmfirth and Honley firms soon followed. A worsted mill at Dolphinholme near Lancaster started machine-spinning in 1784. Riverside spinning mills were opened at Brighouse and Knaresborough in 1785, Meltham in 1786, Addingham in 1787, Haworth in 1790, Hewenden in 1792, Yeadon in 1793, Stanningley, Farsley and Guiseley in 1794, Rawdon in 1796,

Bradford and Batley in 1797, Holme in 1798 and Bingley in 1806.²⁷ John Marshall, a shopkeeper's son, founded the Leeds flax industry at Meanwood in 1788 and built his great Holbeck mills in 1791. And in 1792 the self-made Benjamin Gott opened the famous Bean Ing woollen mill at Leeds.²⁸

Factory development aroused considerable opposition. Local hostility led to the closing of Bradford's first steam-factory in 1793, and riots followed the introduction of power-spinning in 1794. Leeds workers destroyed a mill in 1799.²⁹ But industry expanded: in 1795 Aikin estimated that there were over 3200 broadcloth manufacturers in the West Riding.³⁰ 'The application of steam engines . . .', reported Young, in 1793, 'was nowhere carried further than at Leeds'; but at Pudsey he found a traditional 'mixture of pasturage and manufacture'. By 1800 Pudsey had seven mills, and three steam-factories were working in Bradford.³¹ In the building boom from 1802, the factory system extended in Bradford, Bingley, Halifax, Wakefield, Cleckheaton, Keighley, Huddersfield, Armley and Shipley; 18 woollen mills were built in a decade, and 129 were working by 1833. John Crossley, a carpet weaver, built his Halifax mills in 1802, followed by James Akroyd, a yeoman manufacturer, and his sons, Jonathan and James, in 1805; James junior formed his own firm in 1811.³² A missionary, Samuel Marsden, introduced Australian wool in 1808. In the following year William Hirst introduced revolutionary finishing machinery at Leeds; his shop had to be guarded against angry croppers. Benjamin Law laid the foundations of further fortunes by 'discovering' shoddy at Batley. And in 1811 Akroyd and John Holland adopted Norwich worsted moreens.³³

Old traditions of combination existed in the West Riding, especially among the woolcombers, against whose turbulent organisation ineffective legislation was passed in 1726. But the continuing domestic system retarded unionism: the journeymen were 'little removed from the degree and condition of their masters'. The introduction of machinery and 'capitalist' methods soon provoked an increased militancy, however. South-western workers rioted after machines were introduced at Shepton Mallet in 1776, and Bradford workers resisted every innovation for many years. The principal early opponents of

machinery were the shearmen and woolcombers, who petitioned Parliament against Cartwright's woolcombing machinery in 1790 and 1792 and even promoted a Bill in 1794. The Combination Acts were little noted; the shearmen (or croppers) organised nationally to maintain ancient legislation against gig-mills, and the combers even held a national conference at Coventry, in 1812.³⁴ The shearmen compelled Gott to negotiate with them in 1802; the Whig Earl Fitzwilliam thought they were 'the tyrants of the Country'. Masters insisted that without machinery 'there would not [be] . . . Hands enough to manufacture anything like the Quantity of Cloth' needed. But others supported the men's case. One pious Leeds merchant, Robert Oastler, left the industry in opposition to gig-mills, and Sir James Graham of Leeds opposed the factory system because 'it was very pleasing to see domestic Clothiers living in fields . . . rather than shut up in streets'.³⁵ In 1812 General Grey reported that 'even the more respectable . . . inhabitants were in unison with the deluded and ill-disposed populace' against gig-mills, shearing-frames and factories. A Bill of 1804 urged that 'the employment of numerous looms in the same manufactory should be prohibited'; but Parliament noted that although

the principal progress of the Factory system, which chiefly created the alarm . . . [had occurred] in . . . Leeds, . . . several factories . . . had long been established near Halifax and Huddersfield,

without destroying domestic industry. Nevertheless, Henry Lascelles had to withdraw from the 1806 county election, as a supposed friend of Gott, and in 1807 lost to Viscount Milton, after a contest said to have cost the houses of Harewood and Fitzwilliam over £100,000 each.³⁶ But in 1809 the old prohibitions on shearing machinery were lifted, and the croppers, now a doomed class, increased their violence.

Yorkshire Luddism was aimed particularly against gig-mills and shearing frames. From 1808 William Cartwright had aroused intense opposition by using water-powered finishing machinery at Rawfolds. In 1812 one George Mellor organised Luddite gangs among the Huddersfield hand-croppers, and attacks soon spread to Leeds, Yeadon, Rawdon, Golcar,

Pudsey, Horbury and Halifax mills, a Sheffield barracks and Cartwright's machine waggons. Parliament hastily introduced the death penalty for machine-wrecking, against Lord Byron's opposition. But on 11 April 150 men launched a night attack on Cartwright's mill. They were driven off, but seventeen days later William Horsfall, a Marsden manufacturer, was murdered. Troops, Yeomanry and spies were imported, but the disturbances continued, amid rising bitterness; Methodist ministers even refused to bury shot Luddites. Eventually, Joseph Radcliffe of Huddersfield and the Rev. Hamond Roberson broke the organisation. In January 1813 14 leaders were hanged at York.³⁷

After Waterloo industrial expansion mounted. In 1815 four famous men of the future constructed factories — Jonathan Akroyd at Halifax, Ellis Cunliffe-Lister at Shipley, John Wood at Bradford and William Ackroyd at Otley. Akroyd's friend, John Foster, established his Black Dyke mills at Queensbury in 1819. Bradford had 10 worsted mills in 1815 and 34 in 1833.³⁸ Lascelles' appeals for the hand croppers failed, and with the adoption of new machines from 1820 they passed from history. Meanwhile, various organisations developed among other work-people. Benefit societies and trade clubs operated through the French wars, and by 1823 the Halifax and Bradford savings banks each held between £10,000 and £12,000 in small deposits, and the Huddersfield bank £5000. Workers were urged to support such ventures instead of strikes, which put employers

to great inconvenience, which might be remembered to their disadvantage thereafter, [and] eventually . . . brought the greatest scourge upon themselves.

Unsuccessful Leeds and Dewsbury strikes against wage reductions in 1819 led to a general woollen union in 1822, which organised periodic strikes in individual factories.³⁹ Politically active operatives largely accepted the liberalism of Edward Baines, who edited the *Leeds Mercury* from 1801, and many supported Lancastrian free trade schemes. More Radical groups were also active, and in 1819 were addressed at Leeds by both Hunt and William Cobbett, while Baines organised Parliamentary Reform rallies and Whig aristocrats resigned

their commissions in protest at 'Peterloo'. After the trials of Hunt and Sir Francis Burdett, in 1820, Barnsley revolutionaries planned a county rising, but were dispersed or arrested.⁴⁰

The worsted industry was also rent by disputes. Workers rioted at Shipley and Bradford in 1822, 1824 and 1826, Halifax in 1822 and Guiseley in 1824, against power looms. John Garnett Horsfall introduced the looms at Bradford in 1824, but in the following year workers at Bradford, Halifax, Keighley and other towns struck for twenty-five weeks. The Bradford High Constable, Currer Busfeild, recorded that 'all went off quietly'. But in May 1826 a mob attacked Horsfall's looms, and Busfeild dramatically noted that,⁴¹

I saw 4 men . . . evidently killed, as we went up. The Riot Act read twice. I suppose about 25 killed and wounded.

There was further rioting in 1828, when Simeon Townend introduced power looms in the Thornton valley. Such outbursts played some part in delaying mechanisation; in 1835, of 96,679 English power looms, only 5105 were used in the woollen and worsted industries. The West Riding then employed 582 steam engines and 526 water wheels.⁴²

The weavers had considerable public support. A Paisley writer considered that power looms had brought them 'into a state of wretchedness altogether unknown in Britain, or perhaps in the world'; yet the weavers were

the most numerous, industrious and, perhaps, the most virtuous of your manufacturing operatives . . . the bulwarks of your country.

Such mercantilist ideas linked the hope of saving dying trades with agricultural protection. 'Machinery throws out one description of labour', asserted a Yorkshire pamphleteer, 'and the wild schemes of free trade in corn [would] throw out another'. The handweavers dreamed of various restrictions to limit their rivals, and occasionally saw some panacea in a new invention.⁴³ But the power looms continued to gain ground for all but the finer fabrics. And irregular employment, employers' hostility to trade unionism, low wages and increasing mechanisation had made Yorkshire workers a bitter race by 1830.

III

Throughout the textile industries, many working people suffered, while a minority accumulated great wealth. Earnings fluctuated fantastically: Oldham gingham weavers received 10s. per end in 1793 and 24s. 4d. in 1794.⁴⁴ But the handloom weavers faced a sustained wage fall, from a peak of 39s. 9d. weekly in 1795 to 15s. in 1810 and 5s. in 1830. Woollen weavers' piece rates fell by about 85 per cent between 1795 and 1840. Earnings in Lanarkshire dropped from 21s. to 11s. between 1805 and 1813, in Bolton from 33s. 3d. in 1795 to 5s. 6d. (4s. 1½d. net) in 1834, in Leeds from 26s. in 1800 to under 15s. after 1811, and in Glasgow from 20s. (for skilled men) in 1810 to 9s. 6d. in 1838.⁴⁵ The demand for weavers had led to overcrowding of the trade by the late eighteenth century, and earnings started to decline even before the general introduction of power looms; but Irish immigrants maintained the weavers' numbers. By 1829, 'the name of Weaver was becoming almost synonymous with that of vagrant'. In 1833 the *Dundee Advertiser* wisely advised 'everyone who could possibly get away from the loom [to] desert it'.⁴⁶

Other earnings varied considerably. Leeds woollsorters could average 31s. 1d. on piecework in 1805, 37s. 1d. in 1815, 26s. 9d. in 1835 and 22s. 4d. in 1845. Male slubbers with 22s. 6d. in 1795, got 30s. 8d. in 1805 and 24s. 9d. in 1835, and thereafter slowly rose.⁴⁷ But technological changes and local variations make comparable indices of wages or living costs difficult. Certainly, the 'dark, satanic' colours of traditional accounts have been greatly modified by modern research. Far from there being a continuous decline in workers' conditions, there was, at least after the wartime dislocations ended, a general rise. But in particular periods some sections suffered substantial falls, as economic and industrial conditions varied. And handworkers had difficulty in obtaining alternative employment: the factories required women and children mainly. By 1830 the only labour for many men was to carry their children to the spinning mills, to earn the family's livelihood.

Such embittered, half-starving slum-dwellers were little

attracted to the Mechanics' Institutes and other bodies provided by liberal capitalist benevolence, or by the economic advice regularly emanating from such sources.⁴⁸ But the Radical-minded masses of the new proletariat gave spasmodic and inconsistent support to various agitations. They would lament a legendary 'Merry England', or adopt liberal panaceas of economic or political reform. Some dreamed of social revolution; long-forgotten Robespierres lurk in corners of Northern social history. Others, braving discriminatory blacklists, experimented with trade unionism. Local variations were partly caused by increasing geographic and functional specialisation.⁴⁹ But the assorted movements, linked by personal ties, enthusiastic, ill-planned and only partly conscious of any ultimate goals, existed through the early nineteenth century.

Socialistic schemes were sometimes proposed, but generally to more sophisticated audiences than Northern workers; in any case, Thomas Spence, William Ogilvie and Tom Paine were largely concerned with increasingly irrelevant arguments about 'natural rights' in land ownership. Charles Hall did ally his attacks on primogeniture with anti-capitalist theories, but without postulating alternatives. Patrick Colquhoun, however, unintentionally provided weapons against both aristocrats and industrialists in his income statistics.⁵⁰ In 1813 Owen's *New View of Society* started his long search, humanitarian and eccentric, for alternatives to liberal capitalism; and Ricardo's labour theory of value provided a basis for such later economists as John Gray, William Thompson, Thomas Hodgskin and John Bray. But most socialist writers have only an antiquarian interest; contemporary workmen preferred the blunt Tory-Radicalism of Cobbett's *Political Register* to such academic abstractions.

Various Co-operative ventures were tried from the late eighteenth century, and after the war Owen assumed the leadership of such schemes. His proposed communities were denounced by Cobbett as 'parallelograms of paupers', but Owenite socialism exercised some influence on proletarian Radicals. New Lanark became famous, and was visited by Leeds Poor Law authorities, including Baines and Oastler, in 1819. And co-operative theory was developed, especially in London and Brighton by Dr. William King, under Lady Noel-

Byron's patronage. The main appeal to Northern workers lay in Co-operators' support for the labour theory of value and hostility to capitalist employment of machinery — which, declared the Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, in 1829, 'tended to degrade, pauperise and enslave mankind'.⁵¹ But many other remedies were proposed for proletarian distress. Thomas Attwood and many small Midlands masters persistently called for currency reform. Liberals advocated free trade, Parliamentary Reform and a *laissez-faire* domestic policy: 'commercial enterprise', explained Baines, 'is a subject utterly unfit for Parliamentary regulations'.⁵² When Yorkshire gained two extra Parliamentary seats in 1826, Baines' friend, Marshall, entered the aristocratic preserve of the county representation. Bourgeoisie and proletariat might occasionally ally for such purposes, after nearly half a century of almost unbroken Tory rule. But on industrial regulation there could be no common ground between disciples of Adam Smith and those who lamented the repeal of 'protective' Tudor legislation.

IV

The early riverside mills were often situated in remote rural areas, where labour was scarce and the persisting half-agricultural life of country industrial workers was obviously unsatisfactory to heavily indebted entrepreneurs. While Scottish masters employed dispossessed Highland crofters and Irish labourers, English cotton masters often relied upon low-paid children. As local people often disliked industry and a certain social obloquy met the parents of mill children, it became customary to import children from town workhouses and orphanages. The long-established but decaying custom of long apprenticeship was revived, although in fact, little training was necessary. Parish authorities gladly relieved the Poor rates by virtually selling batches of children to Northern manufacturers. A Parliamentary Committee was told, in 1815, that the London parishes claimed 'the exclusive right of disposing, at their pleasure, of all the children of the person receiving relief'. Robert Gordon alleged in the Commons in 1816 that Northern masters 'agreed to take one idiot for every 19 sane children'.⁵⁴

Throughout the cotton districts, the wretched 'apprentices' toiled for long hours, often in extremely unhealthy conditions. Exhausted children were beaten to work, and sickness, mutilation by machinery and even deaths from malnutrition and long confinement were regular occurrences. Years later, Joseph Livesey remembered seeing deformed Foundling Hospital children trooping into Walton church: many 'were crooked-legged, becoming deformed through having to stop the machinery by placing their knees against it'. Robert Blinco, an illegitimate child of 7 sent from S. Pancras workhouse to Lowdham mill near Nottingham, worked 14 hours daily. He later worked 16 hours at Litton mill near Tideswell, before he was 10; and he bore the marks of childhood beatings throughout his life. 'The confinement and the labour were no burden', recorded William Hutton, a child worker for Lombe, 'but the severity was intolerable, the marks of which I yet carry and shall carry to the grave'. William Dodd alleged that he was terribly maimed as a result of working from the age of 5.⁵⁵ Little children suffered horrible existences in many lonely mills. But contemporary observers delightedly noted children's agile work; long employment was traditionally considered the best antidote for youthful vice. A silk mill keeping '250 children in perpetual employment' greatly cheered Wesley in 1787. Evangelicals were primarily interested in improving workers' morals, and Methodist overlookers were popular with such great employers as Peel. Idleness was the great abomination, the source of debauchery and beggary, asserted an anonymous divine in 1766: 'the lesser time for idleness any trade allowed, the better it was', and a special virtue of Norfolk weaving was that children were employed 'from their infancy, almost'.⁵⁶ Such ideas were inherited from the past. John Locke had advocated industrial schools for the children of applicants for relief, in 1697. 'Experience has already shown how much can be done by the industry of children', declared Pitt, in 1796. Naturally, the virtues of early industry commended themselves to the masters. 'Nothing is more favourable to morals', claimed George Augustus Lee of Manchester, in 1816, 'than habits of early subordination, industry and regularity'. Religious opinion agreed. Three decades later, Nathaniel Pater-son, minister of Galashiels, asserted that⁵⁷

There can be no training of the volatile minds of youth equal to that which is maintained at the factories. . . .

Romantic poets and artists, too, were more impressed by the vastness and energy of the mills than by the miserable conditions inside them.⁵⁸

The children's conditions varied considerably: not all masters resembled Blinco's employers, William, Charles and Thomas Lambert and Ellice Needham. Kitty Wilkinson, the Liverpool philanthropist, 'used to look longingly back' to her apprentice days at Caton mill — 'a heaven on earth', where the manager 'was a father to us all'. At Cressbrook in Derbyshire the children had gardens, a school and a choir — 'the hallelujahs of Handel filled the valley'; and other local employers seem to have been benevolent men. Oldknow provided schools for his workhouse children, and safeguarded their moral welfare; but he employed them for 13 hours daily. Samuel Greg employed about 80 apprentices at Styal in 1790, along with older children earning 9d. to 1s. 6d. weekly. He provided classes, games, baths, a library, a band, a bed for every two children and new clothes every two years. Two-thirds of Arkwright's 1150 workers in three Derbyshire mills in 1789 were children, working 12-hour shifts and attending church or school on Sundays; but they appear to have been mainly local children.⁵⁹ The 500 Edinburgh workhouse boys at Dale's five Lanark mills were healthy, educated and well-housed; they worked 13 hours, but of nearly 3000 employed in 1785-1797 only 14 were reported to have died. At Holywell, Smalley's sons had 300 children who lived in whitewashed rooms; three shared each bed, and a surgeon and Sunday school were provided. Monteith worked 500 children, aged between 6 and 14, 14 hours daily, and accidents were common, but a school, library and chapel were established.⁶⁰ Long hours were not the creation of the factory system. But atrocious cruelties were perpetrated in some mills, especially when anxious masters paid overlookers in relation to production. The Dundee spinning mills were 'huge instruments of demoralisation and slavery', James Myles later recalled. Children worked 15 hours or more, and

the lash of the slave driver was never more unsparingly used in Carolina on the unfortunate slaves than the canes and 'whangs' of mill foremen were then used on helpless factory boys.

The apprentices in the Angus and Perthshire country mills were treated even more harshly.⁶¹

Not all observers were complacent about the situation. Several Scottish ministers condemned child workers' long hours, ill health and lack of moral and religious education in the *Statistical Accounts*.⁶² Manchester residents were horrified by fever epidemics at Peel's Radcliffe Bridge mills in 1784, and local magistrates refused to indenture parish apprentices to mills working at night or over 10 hours daily. West Riding justices followed this lead, at Pontefract in 1803, and the Todmorden and Walsden churchwardens forbade nightwork for workhouse apprentices in 1801. Dr. Aikin wrote in 1795 of

children of a very tender age . . . [who] serve unknown, unprotected and forgotten . . . usually too long confined to work in close rooms, often during the whole night.

Many factories were better, but 'the public had a right to see that its members were not wantonly injured, or carelessly lost'; Aikin blamed Dukinfield's high mortality rates on 'the pernicious system' of employing shifts of children by day and night. 'It is a common tradition in Lancashire', wrote John Fielden, forty-one years later, 'that the beds *never got cold*!'⁶³ Unless decent buildings, clothing, food and education were provided and hours reduced, wrote William Sabatier, 'manufactures would prove the destruction of the people'. Thomas Gisborne advocated legislation against nightwork for children; Dr. Ferriar of Manchester warned that the diseases of the poor might spread; and Thomas Bernard lamented that 'thousands of young children [were] bred up to vice and disease'.⁶⁴

Dr. Thomas Perceval's Manchester 'Board of Health' investigated conditions for the magistrates, and in January 1796 resolved that 'large factories were generally injurious to the constitution of those employed in them'. The Board condemned nightwork and long hours, and asked for the masters' help in 'proposing an application for Parliamentary aid', for 'wise, humane and equal government of all such works'.⁶⁵ Churchmen were also concerned. Dr. Thomas Dunham Whitaker, the vicar of Holme and topographer, condemned the 'pure unmixed evil, moral, medical, religious and political' of industrial extension. He particularly opposed the system of ⁶⁶

apprenticing whole colonies of children to manufactories at the distance of 80 to 100 miles. So long as this is permitted, we shall never want a Slave Trade at home.

Christians regretted the Sabbath-breaking and lack of sound catechising among children, in addition to the hours and conditions of labour. Thomas Whitaker, the vicar of Ringway, sternly rebuked the 'wretched pleas' of masters who worked on Sundays, and John Crosse, the vicar of Bradford, also lamented that long hours precluded any religious instruction.⁶⁷

Thus, in various ways, groups of magistrates, medical practitioners and clergymen protested against children's long employment. Modern writers have demonstrated that medical knowledge was elementary,⁶⁸ and that many later accusations of wholesale brutality were largely unfounded. But comparatively ignorant, prejudiced and short-sighted though many contemporary opponents of early factory practices may have been, their ideas influenced legislation with which few modern observers can find serious fault. |

V

During the eighteenth century there were recurring periods of interest in the fate of apprentice children. From 1747 children proving ill-treatment could secure their discharge, and from 1792 masters might be fined for such behaviour. In 1767 Jonas Hanway gained an Act for boarding out London parish children.⁶⁹ But children locked in mill prentice-houses had little opportunity to approach the justices. In 1802 the leading English calico-printer, Sir Robert Peel of Bury, a Tory M.P. and son of the Burton manufacturer, took up the question. Though shocked by the bad health of his own 1000 apprentices, Peel resisted any 'excessive' proposals. His Bill allowed 12 hours' labour, banned nightwork in stages to 1804 and provided for the whitewashing of walls, ventilation, education, religious instruction, separate dormitories and periodic inspection by clergymen and magistrates. Supported by Wilberforce, Perceval, Lord Stanley and Lord Belgrave, this 'Health and Morals of Apprentices' Bill passed the Commons on 2 June, and soon came into force.⁷⁰ Nine years later, Edward Wilbraham Bootle, the Member for Clitheroe, introduced a Bill to restrict

apprentice migration, and after enquiry by a Parliamentary Committee, an Act was passed in 1816, forbidding London authorities to send children further than forty miles.⁷¹

Peel's Act had little effect. The masters complained of its impracticability, foreseeing industrial disaster and bankruptcy. Inspection soon ceased. 'The Act has not been followed up . . . for these 13 years', declared Arkwright's son, in 1816. 'I think they visited my mills at Cromford twice.'⁷² In any case, the growing use of steam power led to the construction of urban mills, employing local 'free' children, whose earnings were important to ill-paid parents, especially where parochial relief was otherwise refused. Masters with large investments and debts desired rapid returns, and worked their employees, including young doffers, piecers and scavengers, 14, 15 or more hours daily; but the immediate employers were often the parents, hiring their own spinning assistants.

From 1813 Owen advocated more enlightened attitudes, claiming to have proved at New Lanark that reduced hours and humane treatment need not ruin industry.⁷³ In 1815 he addressed the Glasgow manufacturers against the cotton import duties, and was enthusiastically received. But he also alleged that the industry was 'destructive of health, morals and social comforts', and proposed to restrict hours to 12 daily (including 1½ hours for meals), prohibit employment under the age of 10 (or restrict children under 12 to 6 hours' labour) and to provide free education. The suggestion was emphatically opposed, but Owen visited London, secured the reduction of the cotton tax and propounded his reform scheme to Lord Liverpool's Cabinet. 'The Government was favourable to my views . . .', he later claimed, 'if I could induce the Members of both Houses to pass a Bill . . .'⁷⁴ He met several sympathetic Members, and Peel agreed to propose his measure.

On 6 June 1815 Peel told the Commons that 'owing to the present use of steam-power . . . [his Act] was likely to become a dead letter', and condemned the 'indiscriminate and unlimited employment of the poor', which was making industry the nation's 'bitterest curse'. He proposed to prohibit labour under the age of 10, limit children under 18 to 10½ hours' actual labour (plus 1½ hours' mealtimes and ½ hour for education), prohibit nightwork, provide schooling to the age of 14 and to

require the justices to appoint paid inspectors. William Smith, the Unitarian chairman of the Dissenting Deputies, gave support, while Francis Horner wanted further reform, speaking of apprentices being sold with a bankrupt's property. Owen circulated his *Observations* among politicians.⁷⁵ But Peel knew the difficulties better than the ever-optimistic Owen, and awaited Parliament's reactions. He only returned to the subject on 3 April 1816, when he asked for a Select Committee. Finlay and J. C. Curwen announced their opposition to legislation, but the House agreed to Peel's request, and he was appointed chairman of the Committee, which first met on 25 April.

Peel's Committee examined forty-seven witnesses before completing its work on 18 June. Eight medical practitioners favoured reform. Dr. Matthew Baillie thought that 'there was no age, no time of life whatever', when 13 hours' labour could be healthy. Astley Paston-Cooper, a leading surgeon, considered that children could not work over 10 hours without injury and that operatives should work 13 hours 'at no age'. Support was expressed by three physicians, Dr. Christopher Pemberley, Sir Gilbert Blane and John Kinder Wood of Oldham — who thought that such employment would harm himself — and three surgeons, Anthony Carlile, Dr. George Tuthill and Richard Ogle.⁷⁶ But other witnesses opposed legislation. Archibald Buchanan claimed that children of 6 could work 13½ hours (including 1½ hours for meals), because the work was light — 'they had merely to attend there'. Joseph Mayer alleged that if his employees worked under 14 hours they would indulge in drunken riots. Adam Bogle, Monteith's partner, with 750 operatives, claimed that production would decrease proportionately with the reduction of hours, thus helping foreign competitors and decreasing wages. He declared that many women left Owen's benevolent despotism to work for him: one had said that

they had got a number of dancing-masters, a fiddler, a band of music; that there were drills and exercises and that they were dancing together till they were more fatigued than if they were working. . . .

G. A. Lee, who employed 343 children for 13½ hours daily, insisted that they were healthy; and William Sandford, who

employed 42, claimed that factory children were the best Sunday scholars.⁷⁷

Peel's sympathisers were mobilised to give evidence. Owen had collected (not invariably correct) information during a tour with his son, Dale, who remembered his horror at the sights which met them, nearly sixty years later : ⁷⁸

In some large factories, from one-fourth to one-fifth of the children were either cripples or otherwise deformed, or permanently injured by excessive toil, sometimes by brutal abuse.

Owen suggested that children should work in two sets, and told the Committee that Marshall's mills worked 16 hours and some Stockport mills 18 hours. George Gould, a Manchester merchant-manufacturer, stated that children of 5 had previously worked up to 16 hours, and Nathaniel Gould, a Manchester merchant, produced voluminous evidence from Sunday schools and personal researches on immorality, cruelty and long hours in local mills. A Warwickshire magistrate, Theodore Price, 'would never sign an indenture to a cotton mill so long as he lived' and would rather send his own daughters to a Bridewell than to a mill. He stated that the Birmingham poor-house had decided in 1800 to send no children to Peel's mill.⁷⁹ Peel himself blamed his overseers for overworking children in his absence ; but he 'was struck with the uniform appearance of bad health and, in many cases, stunted growth of the children'. John Moss, the governor of Preston workhouse and former master of 150 apprentices at Blackbarrow mill, said that children worked 15 hours from the age of 7 or 8 — and even longer in periods of making up lost time. This evidence 'gave uneasiness' to the proprietors, Messrs. Ainsworth and Catterall, who submitted papers from a surgeon and minister, stating that 'the children had been particularly healthy, and the numbers of deaths very few'. They also sent up William Travers, a former overlooker, to allege that Moss had lied. A Preston manufacturer, John Swainson, stated that local hours were 14½ (including an hour for meals) and that he had tried to persuade other masters to reduce them. And Joseph Dutton of Liverpool revealed that hours were 13 at Oldham and Bolton, 13 to 14 (of actual labour) at Bury and 14 at Ashton ; and many children cleaned machinery during mealtimes. It was 'a system of

oppression inconsistent with the Constitution'.⁸⁰

The 383 pages of evidence were inconclusive. Gott's manager, John Cresswell, showed that his employees worked 13 hours (including 2 hours for meals), not 16, as stated by Owen. And employers in other industries supported their friends. Josiah Wedgwood, who had 126 children in his pottery works, agreed with such cotton masters as George Benson Strutt of Belper and Henry Hollins of Mansfield, in their claims. William Evans, a Manchester justice who supported the masters, admitted that he never knew of the 1802 provisions for inspection until 1816.⁸¹ Peel was compelled to modify his proposals.

But public interest was rising. Some masters were worried enough to set their houses in order. 'Mr Colbeck called', recorded a Wharfedale justice, William Vavasour of Weston Hall, in May, 'and . . . wished to have a testimonial that his factory was well conducted . . .'. John Fielden announced his support for reform. George Walker, the Yorkshire artist, painted some factory children in 1814, noting that although some masters had effected improvements, many children lacked 'the pure air necessary for health'. Manchester operatives had formed a committee to support reform in 1814, and were supported by the benevolent Nathaniel Gould in canvassing at Westminster; Peel's son, the future Prime Minister, gave £50.⁸² Gould was said to have spent some £20,000 on the cause before his death in 1820. He gained the support of several leading Manchester men. During 1816 the Rev. Robert Twedell and Dr. John Mitchell wrote on Manchester conditions, and Dr. John Boutflower on Salford. In 1817 they were joined by other Anglican priests — John Clowes, George Holt, E. Booth and J. T. Allen — the surgeons Thomas Bellot and Henry Dadley, and a Quaker, John Windsor. Another clergyman, Abraham Hepworth, the surgeons William Simmons and William Wood, the senior Infirmary physician, Dr. S. A. Bardsley, and Doctors Robert Agnew, Michael Ward and W. Winstanley became investigators in the following year. Gould published their evidence, and Bolton and Manchester workers sent petitions. A Manchester and Salford petition was signed by 1700 people, including Dr. Blackburne, warden of the collegiate church, 20 other clergymen, 6 justices, 9 doctors of medicine and 21 surgeons.⁸³

While Peel's activities were curtailed by illness, there was considerable literary activity. The masters claimed that

in the lower orders, the deterioration of morals increases with the quantity of unemployed time. . . . Thus the Bill actually encourages vice. . . .

Furthermore, they pointed out, the Bill would limit all workers, for

as soon as the younger persons employed cease working, the more advanced must cease likewise; their labour is so connected that they must cease or go on together. . . .

Owen, however, told Liverpool that industrial practices 'interfered with the best interests of society', by preventing education and causing ill-health. He thought Peel's modified proposal 'very inadequate', and urged Government to insist upon wider reform.⁸⁴ The intellectuals' early entrancement had gradually disappeared. In 1814 Wordsworth regretted industry's 'baneful effects', in *The Excursion*; and Southey condemned the 'set of child-jobbers' and 'soul-murder and infanticide'. After seeing a Glasgow mill in 1810 Louis Simond thought that 'the laws should interfere between avarice and nature'. And public opinion was further aroused when 17 girls, locked in Atkinson's cotton mill at Colne Bridge for the night shift, were burned to death, in January 1818.⁸⁵

VI

Peel introduced his further modified Bill on 19 February 1818. It applied only to cotton mills, prohibiting labour under 9 and limiting children under 16 to 11 hours' labour, plus 1½ hours for meals; and justices were only to appoint inspectors on receiving particular complaints. Peel opened the Second Reading on 23 February, condemning children's nightwork, with which 'he was ashamed to own that he had himself been concerned'. Lancashire workers sent supporting petitions, but opposition was strong. Stanley presented Manchester mill-owners' petitions, calling for further investigation. 'Excepting in one instance, in the county of Lancaster', insisted Kirkman Finlay of Glasgow, 'there was no proof of the existence of any evils which could justify legislative interference'. In the re-

sumed debate, on 27 April, Peel junior sarcastically declared that

if all that the hon. Members had said of the healthiness of cotton mills were true, application ought to be made to the Legislature for the erection of cotton mills . . .

But when Sir Robert presented a Stockport petition on 10 April, Sir James Graham denounced the signatories as 'a set of idle, discontented, discarded, good-for-nothing workmen'. Stanley, Lascelles, Finlay and George Philips opposed any interference with 'free labour' and parental rights. But Smith and Wilberforce supported the Bill, which passed by 91 votes to 26.⁸⁶

A 41-year-old Evangelical Tory lawyer, the 2nd Lord Kenyon, introduced the measure in the Lords on 7 May. Liverpool was sympathetic, refusing to believe that children could work over 15 hours without injury. But Lord Chancellor Eldon complained of insufficient evidence, and the 8th Earl of Lauderdale demanded further enquiry, as the 1816 testimony 'was perfectly unfit for being made the foundation of any legislative proceedings'. Such legal and economic advice led to the decision to form a Committee of the whole House, although Dr. George Henry Law, Bishop of Chester, urged the Peers on 19 May to 'assert the cause of defenceless and suffering youth'. Kenyon and Law received detailed information, and Law visited mills in his diocese. But between 20 May and 5 June Kenyon's Committee heard remarkable evidence from medical practitioners retained by the masters. A Manchester Infirmary physician, Dr. Edward Holme, could not be drawn to admit that 23 hours' labour would necessarily be harmful. William Whatton, a surgeon, considered that 12 hours' standing might harm a child of 6, but 'the labour was so moderate' that it would not hurt a 10-year-old. Dr. Henry Hardie, a Manchester physician, denied that cotton flue was harmful, as it was expectorated. Thomas Wilson, a Bingley surgeon, 'did not see that it was necessary' for children to have recreation. William Wilson, Gavin Hamilton, James Ainsworth and Thomas Turner gave similar evidence; and Dr. Edward Carbutt, a Manchester Infirmary surgeon, explained that he and others had been employed by a committee of cotton masters.⁸⁷

Such evidence angered reformers, but delayed progress. One Manchester pamphleteer claimed that

the factory system is destructive even to adults . . . how ruinous, then, must it be in its effects on young children. . . .

Sir James Mackintosh considered that the employers must be 'ogres'. No doubt, the operatives' disappointment increased Lancashire's militancy, though the reformers hastily disowned the rioters. Doherty's spinners staunchly supported Peel: ⁸⁸

When the men contributed nothing to the funds of the Union, they regularly contributed for the purpose of procuring an Act of Parliament. . . .

But this connection led some masters to brand the reformers as radicals; Gould's agitation had caused 'great, and I think *not unfounded* apprehension of some mischief', reported James Norris, a Manchester magistrate. Doherty had recently been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for intimidation. But Hobhouse, the Home Under-Secretary, told Norris that the issue divided the parties, and that 'it was impossible to exclude it from consideration'.⁸⁹ Masters continued to condemn the 'dangerous' proposal; but at Manchester they were worried enough secretly to agree to a 12 hours' day, though not announcing the concession, 'as it might seem to be a giving way to the men', who were then rioting.⁹⁰ The reformers claimed that reform was particularly vital for cotton mills, where children started work at 5, 6, 7 or 8 and toiled for 14 or 15 hours in high temperatures, without proper mealbreaks. They denied that children were 'free agents', that foreign markets would be lost or that masters would be compelled to dismiss child workers.⁹¹ The last threat was serious to many families.

On 25 February 1819 Kenyon moved for a further Committee. Eldon considered that overworking of children was already indictable at common law, and preferred 'a general law . . . for the regulation of manufactures of all kinds' to a particular measure. But in March further evidence was heard from Lancashire operatives and medical men. John Farebrother of Bolton told of beatings administered by himself and his master, Luke Taylor, when children arrived after 5 a.m. George Paxton of Manchester revealed that his hours had been

increased to $15\frac{1}{2}$ daily, after reports that the Bill had been rejected; his employer had stated that 'those men who did not choose to work the hours might go about their business'. Thomas Jarrold, Dadley, Boutflower and Simmons of Manchester and Salford and Dr. Llewellyn Jones of Chester gave medical evidence.⁹²

The regular modifications of the proposal did not mollify opponents, however. 'Nothing can more decidedly injure the manufacturers than to interfere between the masters and their labourers', insisted Philips; labour was simply 'a commodity for sale and purchase'. But Kenyon persevered. 'The evidence', he claimed, on 14 June,

shows the injury . . . from being employed 14, 15 or 16 hours a day, in places to 80, 85 and nearly 90 degrees . . . [The children's] ill state of health . . . imperiously calls for a legislative interference, to prevent that waste of human life which such a system produces.

On 2 July the proposal finally passed. It was a moderate measure, providing that from 1820 no child under 9 should work in a cotton mill and that children under 16 should be restricted to 12 hours' actual labour, between 5 a.m. and 9 p.m. Mealtimes of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours were added, and a further hour was allowed to make up lost time in water-powered mills. The ceilings and walls were to be washed twice yearly, and a copy of the Act was to be exhibited in each mill; penalties were fixed at between £10 and £20. The defeated masters took some revenge by blacklisting the witnesses: 'they were flung out of employment', it was later alleged,⁹³

and so persecuted . . . that they had no employment for weeks and months after; and some of them were obliged to leave the country. . . .

VII

Further progress was slow after 1819. Masters had objected to the Act because

it branded cotton factories exclusively . . . with an unmerited reproach [and] . . . recognised a principle which might and afterwards would be carried most dangerous lengths. . . .

But their fears were unjustified. In December 1819 Peel carried a Bill to allow owners of burned-down mills to employ workers in other mills by night.⁹⁴ And thereafter the cause languished. Gould died and Peel left Parliament in 1820. In 1823 Colonel Ralph Fletcher found no sign of 'any lively interest' among Bolton spinners, who seemed to prefer long hours and high wages, though Fletcher himself favoured reductions for children. But the agitation had brought together varied groups. The workers 'had their facilities sharpened and improved by constant communication', explained Richard Guest: '. . . they became Political Citizens'.⁹⁵ Humanitarianism was not their only motive. The operatives wished to restrict their own hours, thus spreading employment, to maintain children's wages and to restrict the age of entry, while retaining their traditional control over child workers.

In 1825 Lancashire groups restarted the agitation. Such work was still dangerous and the campaign only began in Manchester, Stockport, Bolton and Blackburn; but Doherty was joined by several future leaders, including Thomas Foster, James Turner and Philip Grant. And at Bradford the Evangelical Tory John Wood, now a leading worsted manufacturer, and two other Tory masters, Matthew Thompson and John Rand, favoured a 10 hours' day. But discussions with other worsted employers proved abortive, and the idea was reluctantly dropped.⁹⁶ Byron's friend, John Cam Hobhouse, the Whig Member for Westminster, assumed the Parliamentary leadership. On 6 May 1825 he moved for leave to introduce a Bill to reduce the children's labour to 11 hours and to enforce Peel's Act. 'In the best regulated mills', he told the Commons on 16 May,

the children are at present compelled to work 12½ hours a day. . . . In other mills they are obliged to work 15 and 16 hours. Now, is it possible for children to live, who are daily suffering under an atmosphere, the temperature of which is warmer than the warmest summer days? . . .

When Hornby claimed that legislation would lose 'two millions and a half of productive revenue', Hobhouse retorted that he would rather give up the cotton industry than 'draw such a sum out of the blood and bones and sinews of these unfortunate

children'. His fellow Member, Burdett, condemned industrial slavery: 'he knew not a more crying evil, or one that called more loudly for the interference of Parliament'. And Smith condemned 'shameless, barefaced and inhuman' evasions of Peel's Act, telling the House on 21 May that negro slaves worked less than Manchester children. But Philips still insisted that the Bill would reduce adults' hours and cause wholesale dismissals.⁹⁷

Considerable support was raised in the cotton towns. Even the Manchester Chamber of Commerce agreed that some employers 'worked their people to excess'; but it thought that any legislation should be general. Manchester reformers, however, meeting in the 'Robin Hood' inn, favoured much stricter legislation than Hobhouse's Bill. William Hall, a Chorley spinner long blacklisted for reform activities, condemned the employers and their mouthpiece, the *Manchester Guardian*. He considered Peel's Act

a powerful preventive of those loathsome instances of infantile lewdness and lasciviousness he had too frequently witnessed . . .

— it had 'improved the health of the children', but was now inoperative.⁹⁸ 'A Lancashire Manufacturer' found that most Manchester mills worked 14 hours, and that children often spent the 1½ hours' mealbreaks in cleaning machinery. 'Matters were, for obvious reasons, better at Manchester than in most or any places beside', but only Stockport mills appeared to work longer hours.⁹⁹

Hobhouse was compelled to abandon the '11 hours' plan; the younger Peel was doubtful about even the amended measure. The mutilated Act passed on 22 June prohibited child labour between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. and during mealbreaks, provided a 9 hours' day on Saturdays and limited the 'making up' time to 30 minutes — although an hour was allowed for mechanical failures. Parents were to certify their children's ages, and millowners and their fathers and sons were prohibited from acting as magistrates on cases under the Act.¹⁰⁰

After this modest success, the agitation again subsided. When Doherty became secretary to a 'Society for the Protection of the Children employed in Cotton Factories' in 1828, few ventured to support him.¹⁰¹ There were, however, occasional

signs of interest. 'The children of Israel, while under Egyptian bondage, did not work nearly so many hours as the people in factories', asserted the Radical James Whittle, in the *Manchester Gazette*. James Mellor of Huddersfield appealed to Lord Milton and Otway Cave to help the thousands earning 3s. to 6s. weekly and the virtually starving unemployed.¹⁰² And in May 1829 Hobhouse promoted another Bill, which rapidly passed, to facilitate prosecutions under his 1825 Act.¹⁰³ But the cotton children still worked 12 hours daily; and children elsewhere remained 'free agents', with liberty to work from any age and for any time.

An important new figure was now interested in the controversy. Michael Thomas Sadler was a 49-year-old Evangelical, born in Derbyshire and since 1800 a Leeds linen merchant with his brother Benjamin. A pious man throughout his life, as a youth he had defended persecuted Methodists, and was now a social worker with Robert Oastler's son, Richard, and a Sunday school leader. Sadler had joined the 'Corporation families', defending a 'Church and King' Toryism against Radical dissent. In 1807 he was Wilberforce's election agent, and later became a Tory speaker and writer, well known for his opposition to Roman Catholic Emancipation. During the 'twenties he gradually linked his religious philanthropy and his high Toryism. His 'notions on political economy', he declared in 1826, were simply 'to extend the utmost possible degree of human happiness to the greatest possible number of human beings'.¹⁰⁴ This aim dominated Sadler's interest in population studies. In 1829 he published an anti-Malthusian essay on *Ireland, Its Evils and Their Remedies*, and in 1830 two volumes on *The Law of Population*. Both books condemned child labour and were savagely reviewed by Thomas Babington Macaulay.¹⁰⁵ On both political and humanitarian grounds, Sadler hated 'the new system'. The liberal Toryism of Huskisson and Peel was 'earthly, selfish and devilish'; and the factory system¹⁰⁶

disturbed the peace of nature, making towns like to cities in a siege, blazing with illuminations and calling infant existences into perpetual labour . . . a man counted from their birth the gain he should make of his children by their labour in the accursed manufactories.

Sadler's philosophy rested on a social, traditional Toryism, as opposed to the increasingly fashionable individualist creed of 'atomistic' liberalism.

Sadler's speeches against Roman Catholic Emancipation led the 4th Duke of Newcastle to offer him a seat at Newark in 1829, 'as a bulwark of the Protestant cause'. After a strenuous battle with Serjeant Thomas Wilde, during which Newcastle was alleged to have coerced his tenants, Sadler was elected on 5 March, with 801 votes to 587. In Parliament he opposed Emancipation, Wilmot Horton's emigration schemes and any move towards free trade, and spoke on workers' conditions and for an Irish Poor Law. His social policy, he told Newark electors in July, was to

support in their just rights and essential interests every rank of society, and, above all, the labouring classes of the community, whose prosperity was the foundation of all others.

'The modern system', he declared at Whitby in September, was 'an attack upon the privileges of labouring poverty throughout.' The sick, pious Sadler, whose recreation was composing metrical versions of the psalms, was an odd figure in the world of politics and society.¹⁰⁷ But for six years his paternalistic Toryism was a major factor in the struggle for factory reform.

By 1830 some of the worst features of the early factory system had been amended. Parochial 'apprenticeship' was virtually dead. Working hours had been reduced to some extent. The new urban mills 'were much more comfortable and healthy for the workpeople . . . with numerous windows . . .'.¹⁰⁸ But as the weavers' children succeeded the spinners' families in the mills, the old family organisation was dissolving; and child labour became an economic necessity to many parents. Many children still worked long hours, and the rises in real wages were far from reaching every family. There was still much in the industrial picture to disgust humanitarians and anger reformers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEGINNING OF THE FACTORY MOVEMENT

1830 opened on a sombre scene in the industrial areas. Thousands of workers around Huddersfield were existing on 2½d. per day. Cumbrian weavers, Graham told the Commons, faced 'pinching hunger and despair'; and Cobbett found the distress at Bolton 'so great as scarcely to admit of description', and roundly condemned 'all the stories of the *Leeds Mercury*, that great maudlin liar of the North, and those of its brother liar, the *Manchester Guardian*'. Many commentators, like the Tory Lord Wynford, blamed the new machinery for all troubles. 'If you ask me what a Manufacturer by Power is', wrote a Manchester pamphleteer, 'I answer, a Manufacturer of Poverty.'¹ Leeds stuff operatives complained that

The rapid increase of [power looms] inverts the decrees of Providence [and] is an evil of such magnitude as to strike at the very existence of the working classes at no distant date.

Such politicians as Sir John Wrottesley and Edward Littleton attacked 'Truck' payments; and even Francis Place went 'sick at heart' and 'always became a savage when he saw' Truck-paying employers, he told Joseph Hume, an opponent of anti-Truck legislation.² But many remedies were proposed for proletarian misery. Coleridge advocated a Christian society, in which property should be treated as a trust; Southey idealised a spurious medievalism, while supporting State social action; William Thompson planned a domestic communism. Over 50 Co-operative societies were formed during 1830. Attwood's Birmingham Political Union allied with Lord Blandford and some local Tories, to promote Parliamentary and currency reform. The indefatigable Doherty advocated wide political and economic reforms. In April he founded the National Association of United Trades; but later Lancashire

strikes provoked lockouts which reduced his spinners' union to 'almost complete insignificance'.³

Many working-class Radicals supported Liberal demands for suffrage reform and free trade; Leeds workers petitioned for both. These issues, with negro slavery, were leading topics on Yorkshire hustings at the election following George IV's death, when Elland workmen stoned Tory supporters.⁴ A wider franchise offered hope of salvation from economic distress, and the summer's Paris Revolution raised Radical hopes; 'Orator Hunt' celebrated it at Bolton and John Smithson at Leeds. New Radical papers were widely circulated. Doherty's *United Trades Co-operative Journal* appeared in March, and Henry Hetherington's *Penny Papers* and William Carpenter's *Political Letters* in October. Optimism and agitation rose further when Earl Grey formed his Whig Ministry in November. A month later, Hunt was elected by the wide-suffrage town of Preston, smashing the Stanleys' ancient power, to the 'entire satisfaction' of young John Bright.

Against this background of distress, bitterness, defeat and rising hope, the Factory Movement was born.

I

On 28 September 1830 Richard Oastler visited his friend John Wood, at Horton Hall, Bradford. At 40, Robert Oastler's son was a tall, handsome man with a varied range of experience. Educated by the Moravians at Fulneck, he had been dissuaded from a legal career by his father's conscientious objections, and, after some training as an architect, eventually became a general merchant in Leeds. In 1820 his business failed and, after paying his creditors in full, Oastler succeeded to his father's post as steward to Thomas Thornhill, the absentee squire of Fixby Hall, near Huddersfield. He also inherited his father's piety and social interests, which had brought him into contact with Sadler, during Leeds cholera epidemics.⁵ But, as with Sadler, youthful Methodism had yielded to a staunch Anglicanism; and, with many other Yorkshire Evangelicals, Oastler had joined Wilberforce's supporters at the 1807 county election. A Tory Churchman and agent for substantial estates near Huddersfield and Leeds, Oastler became a popular figure in

the Riding by leading the opposition to the vicar of Halifax's extortionate tithes, in 1827.⁶ His 37-year-old host was another Evangelical Tory. The son of a leading comb manufacturer, Wood had served his apprenticeship in the Bradford worsted industry, started his own business in 1812 and become the greatest worsted spinner in Britain, practising his benevolence in model mills. Now Wood revealed to Oastler 'the cruelties daily practised in our mills on little children', by long hours, short meal intervals and severe punishments. He challenged him, as a prominent negro emancipationist, to take up the question, and Oastler promised to do so. Oastler's solemn oath to Wood before leaving Bradford early on 29 September was to dominate the rest of his life.⁷

On the same day Oastler wrote his celebrated letter on 'Yorkshire Slavery', comparing local conditions with those in the Caribbean plantations:

Thousands of our fellow-creatures . . . are this very moment existing in a state of slavery *more horrid* than are the victims of that hellish system, '*colonial slavery*'. . . . The very streets which receive the droppings of an 'Anti-Slavery Society' are every morning wet by the tears of innocent victims at the accursed shrine of avarice, who are *compelled*, not by the cart-whip of the negro slave-driver, but by the equally appalling thong or strap of the overlooker, to hasten, half-dressed, *but not half-fed*, to those magazines of British infantile slavery — *the worsted mills in the town and neighbourhood of Bradford!!!*

Thousands of children under 14 were working 13 hours daily, with only 30 minutes' interval, and Oastler urged humanitarian Yorkshire to demand reform of such 'scenes of misery, acts of oppression and . . . slavery, even on the threshold of our own homes'. He delivered the letter to his father's friend, Baines of the *Leeds Mercury*, the leading Northern journal.⁸ Such a passionate attack on his fellow liberal nonconformists seriously embarrassed Baines. So, although admitting the truth of Oastler's assertions, he attacked the comparison with negro slavery as an 'empty jingle of words', and held back the letter for two weeks, then condemning its 'undue warmth'.⁹

The publication of Oastler's appeal instantly started a bitter controversy in the local Press. Simeon Townend answered the 'violent and undeserved attack' on the masters' behalf, in the

Tory *Leeds Intelligencer*, claiming that child workers were essential, their work was 'far from laborious' and they received excellent training, humane treatment and useful incomes. An anonymous nonconformist minister vouched for the children's contentment in their Providentially ordained sphere. But Smithson praised Oastler's 'very able letter' at a Leeds Radical dinner. And an anonymous writer in the *Mercury* declared that Oastler had been too moderate: most Bradford children worked 14 hours, in unhealthy heat, among illiterate and immoral operatives. In late October Oastler wrote a second letter, condemning the 14-16 hours' day of many — or most — mills, the punishments, the unhealthy conditions and the masters who profited from such oppression. Again, the *Mercury* admitted his facts, and the *Intelligencer* agreed. Matthew Thompson advocated 'legislative interference'; John Halliley, a Dewsbury master, commended Oastler's 'truly pious and benevolent interposition'; and Richard Webster of Halifax, who hoped for voluntary reform, revealed that local conditions were worse than in Bradford.¹⁰

If Oastler was disappointed in his hope that an appeal to nonconformist piety would promote instant improvement, he could draw some consolation from the support of some of the largest Yorkshire employers. And operative opinion was soon aroused. Oastler's 'manly and able letters' earned thanks from the Huddersfield Radicals and were printed as broadsides. On hearing of them, the Manchester operatives' committee revived with new hope.¹¹ In November Wood, Thompson and Rand again solicited support from Bradford employers, 23 of whom — 'almost every Bradford spinner', commented Wood — called a meeting in the Talbot Inn for 23 November. Wood was delighted:

I hope that I am not too sanguine in saying that so far as we are concerned the wished for object is sure of being accomplished — I mean to say that I think the disposition sincerely exists.

The 'numerous and highly respectable meeting', under Rand's chairmanship, carried Thompson's proposal for legislation to restrict children under 14 to 11 hours' labour (excluding 2 hours for meals) and 8 hours on Saturdays. Only Townsend dissented.

Hoping that the matter was now settled, Baines expressed

'great satisfaction', praised Oastler's 'humane exertions' and the masters' 'laudable example', and rejoiced that Lord Morpeth was to present the petition. The *Mercury* resumed the more congenial task of assailing Tory oppression. But Oastler, now much better informed, regretted that Thompson's original proposal to restrict children under 15 had been rejected. 'The factory system', he wrote to Baines,

as at present conducted, is, in every sense of the word, the worst that can be; with proper arrangements it might be made the best. . . . The system which impoverishes, enslaves and brutalises the labourer can never be advantageous to any country. . . . The constitution of this country and the present factory system cannot long exist together; their principles are as opposite as light and darkness.

He now wanted to prohibit the employment of children under 10. Townend countered with denials of the masters' unanimity and promises to organise hostile petitions.¹² The struggle had started.

II

Radical agitators were active during the winter, with their Political Unions. London Radicals founded the National Union of the Working Classes in April 1831, and Hunt allied it with Northern groups. Yorkshire Irishmen collected O'Connell's Catholic Rent. Everywhere, the confused, multi-purpose demand for Parliamentary Reform was rising. Workers saw Reform as a step to economic improvements, Baines as a belated admission of the middle classes to political power; and George Condry, a Radical barrister, even wanted it as a bastion against Popery.¹³ The Reform Bill, introduced on 1 March, was acclaimed by countless Northern meetings, while the *Quarterly Review* morosely noted the increasing strength of Whig and Radical journals, including the 'impudently inconsistent' *Times*.¹⁴ And amid the muddled pattern of the Reform agitation, other voices were raised. The Rev. George Stringer Bull of Bradford and Joseph Livesey of Preston led Temperance movements; John Gray advocated currency reform; and Lord Milton continually attacked the Corn Laws. At Oxford Nassau Senior explained the Iron Law of Wages for the benefit of rioting agricultural workers. The Lancashire strikes continued

until March, becoming increasingly bitter after the murder of Thomas Ashton, the Hyde millowner's son. Woollen workers at Gott's great new Leeds mills began a 33-weeks' strike in February, and periodic attacks were made on Yorkshire mills and masters.¹⁵

After the presentation of the Bradford petition, the 44-year-old Hobhouse had promised to introduce a Bill. But in January the hostile masters started a counter-campaign. Townend found a willing ally in William Ackroyd, a 38-year-old hard-drinking Liberal nonconformist with two mills at Otley. On 27 January and 3 February they organised meetings in the Talbot Inn, to condemn any legislative interference: foreign competition, heavy taxation and 'that actual necessity for voluntary and daily labour under which ['the lower classes'] were born' made any reduction of hours impossible. 'We think 12 hours a day is little enough', declared Ackroyd, the chairman,

and we are also of opinion that there are no grounds for the accusations against the trade made by the gentlemen of Bradford.

He and Townend were determined to work at least 12 hours and strongly condemned Oastler's 'inflammatory and unwarrantable language'.¹⁶

Halifax masters soon followed Bradford. On 5 March they met under James Akroyd in the Old Cock Tavern and unanimously passed 14 resolutions against statutory limitations of hours, which would reduce wages, 'materially cripple' parents, raise prices, cut exports, create unemployment and restrict enterprise. Working conditions were healthy, and masters were 'unimpeachable' in their 'humanity, kindness and considerate attention'. Corn Laws and taxation policy made long hours inevitable; but the meeting recorded its belief in ¹⁷

the pernicious tendency and effects of all *legislative enactments*, whether protective or restrictive, which propose to regulate the details of trade and manufactures.

The terms of Hobhouse's Bill became known in February. It proposed to prohibit the employment of children under 9 and restrict those under 18 to 11½ hours' labour and 8½ on Saturdays (excluding mealtimes), with no nightwork.¹⁸ Baines welcomed these modest proposals, but asked for 'the opinions

of *practical* men'. The 'practical' men instantly condemned the ban on children's nightwork, which, they claimed, would prevent the full use of machinery and would ruin water-powered mills; consequently, Baines condemned the Bill.¹⁹

Disappointed at the absence of liberal and religious support, Oastler now advocated factory reform as a moral cause. His vision had widened. He wished to cure unemployment by 'spreading' available work; and he now realised that restriction of child labour might well restrict adults. To him, the Halifax resolutions implied that 'God's laws must bend and break at the call of avarice and self interest'. His letter was received by Baines' second son, Edward, a 31-year-old Liberal well known for his arrogant self-confidence and long unfriendly to Oastler. Baines junior severely cut the epistle, adding comments on its 'unmerciful length', 'brimstone rhetoric' and 'infirmity'. This impertinence broke Oastler's uneasy alliance with the *Mercury*; he sent the complete letter to Robert Perring, who gladly published it, with pungent comments, in the *Intelligencer*. Baines retaliated by attacking Oastler's 'intemperance', but John Foster's Radical *Leeds Patriot* praised the 'excellent letter' and asked that it might receive any future papers.²⁰ From this time Oastler and Baines were bitter opponents; and already there were signs of that Tory-Radical alliance which was to scandalise Yorkshire Liberals for the next two decades.

III

During 1831 Oastler and his friends received valuable support from another group of 'practical' men. Medical practitioners and others, who knew the factory districts well, published several works on the effects of industrial conditions, and such authoritative surveys became major textbooks for the reformers.

John Roberton, a 34-year-old Scottish surgeon in Warrington and Manchester, asserted in his *Remarks on the Health of English Manufacturers* that

the nature of their present employment rendered existence itself in thousands of instances, in every great town, one long disease.

He estimated that three-quarters of the inhabitants of Manchester annually needed or thought they needed medical treat-

ment.²¹ Dr. J. K. Walker of Huddersfield, writing on the census, condemned those who treated man as 'a manufacturing animal', and urged masters to act as the 'moral guardians of this great family'. Walker noted differences between Lancashire and Yorkshire: 'it would be difficult to find an equal number in enjoyment of better health' than wool-workers among other groups of children — but 'not so in the cotton factories . . .'.²² An energetic 36-year-old Leeds surgeon, Charles Turner Thackrah, published a pioneer work on the medical effects of industry. To him,

The employment of young children in *any* labour is wrong. The term of physical growth ought not to be a term of physical exertion. . . .

He considered that the fault lay in the system rather than with individual masters, but legislation was vital, for even enlightened masters rarely knew 'of the injury to health and life which mills occasioned'. Thackrah reviewed the gradual extension of hours, reduction of intervals and speeding-up of machinery, and described the human results seen outside a Manchester mill: ²³

Here I saw, or thought I saw, a degenerate race — human beings stunted, enfeebled and depraved — men and women that were not to be aged — children that were never to be healthy adults. It was a mournful spectacle.

Such medical opinions were supported by an anonymous manufacturer's volume, later revealed as the work of William Rathbone Greg, the 22-year-old son of Samuel Greg, the great Cheshire millowner. The first essay of the future critic and anti-religious writer was a constant embarrassment to his Liberal family. He examined industrial labour in some detail, alleging that

The work of spinners and stretchers is amongst the most laborious that exists . . . it is next to impossible for any human being, however hardy or robust, to sustain this exertion for any length of time, without permanently injuring his constitution.

Children's work was much less arduous, but they suffered from the constant attention which they are required to keep up, and *the intolerable fatigue of standing for so great a length of time. . . .*

Greg ascribed Lancashire ill-health to bad diets, the use of stimulants, 'severe and unremitting labour', the 'unwholesome' air and the employment of mothers:

It is useless any longer to nibble at the evil — it must be attacked in its strongholds, it must be uprooted from its sources. . . .

He urged employers to support the cause.²⁴ Much of Greg's information was obtained from Matthew Fletcher, a 35-year-old Bury surgeon, Radical and great-grandson of John Kay.

The publications provided some support for Oastler's campaign. But in the spring the controversy was still principally conducted in the columns of the Yorkshire Press. When Webster attacked the Halifax resolutions, one 'Vindex' replied for the masters, condemning false 'humanity' and 'partial and fanatic argument'. To 'Vindex' the agitation seemed merely a furtive attempt by the great employers to ruin smaller rivals; in any case, restriction would be ²⁵

a direct and gross violation of the liberty of the subject and an invasion of the rights of the poor man as master of his house and family.

But the Bill was now to be presented, and both sides prepared for a larger battle than skirmishes in Yorkshire newspapers.

IV

Hobhouse's Bill appeared during one of the Reform crises, and was debated against a background of anger and violence. Part of Oastler's task was to separate his literary campaign from the political arguments. Already he was accused of being a hireling of the slaveowners and Tories, trying to distract attention from emancipation and reform. But already the pattern of future alignments on the factory issue had been shown by the attitudes of the Leeds Press. Already the doctrines of progressive Liberalism had been used to justify opposition to legislation. And Tory manufacturers — Wood, Rand and Thompson — had supported Oastler, while Liberals — Ackroyd and the Akroyds — opposed him. Behind the public pronouncements lay divergent, though as yet incompletely developed philosophies. The hostile masters, principally nonconformist Liberals, increasingly relied on the ideas of Adam Smith, as

interpreted by later vulgarisers, while Oastler gradually developed a personal social philosophy, which had much in common with Burke's defence of traditional society. The little Tory groups who rallied to the parish church in each Northern town contributed much to the factory reformers' ideals, as did Oastler's own experience of the hierarchic order of the countryside and, later, the ideas of his working-class associates.

However much Oastler disliked it, some organisation of the reformers became increasingly desirable. The hostile masters had established committees, and over a hundred worsted spinners petitioned against the Bill. Worse still, masters' delegations — including Western and Fifehire manufacturers — induced Hobhouse to alter his proposals. Each group of employers sought to exclude their own businesses from any restriction; and Baines supported their 'practical' objections. Hobhouse gradually yielded: parts of the woollen industry were exempted; silk mills were to be allowed to employ children of 7; water mills were permitted to make up time; and, finally, a 12 hours' day was to be allowed.²⁶ Unless reformers united, the possibility of reform would be lost.

Spontaneous, independent 'Short Time Committees' of reformers were formed at Huddersfield and Leeds in March, and Bradford and Keighley groups soon followed. Members were mainly Radical workmen and tradesmen, meeting informally in some tavern. The original 17 Huddersfield members were 9 woollen workers, 3 cotton spinners, 4 tradesmen and the local co-operative store manager; the chairman was John Leech, a 29-year-old general dealer, and the secretary James Brook, a furniture dealer aged 34.²⁷ The Leeds men were led by John Hammond, a woollen worker, and a Radical operative agitator, Ralph Taylor, and the Keighley reformers by David Weatherhead, a tradesman, and Abraham Wildman, the Radical poet. Bradford overlookers met on 11 April under John Hall, an overseer at Wood's factory, and Leeds reformers organised a local delegate rally three days later. Both meetings prepared petitions, and an open meeting at Bradford started a third, on 18 April. As far North as Dundee operatives were active — though local flax-masters were bitterly hostile to Hobhouse.²⁸

The committees acted independently. The Leeds men frankly admitted to Hobhouse that a limitation of child labour

would automatically restrict adults — 'hence the objection of the manufacturer and . . . our support of the Bill'. And Doherty told Manchester unionists that ²⁹

men were as much entitled to protection for their labour as masters were for their machines; but men would not apply for it until convinced that it was practicable.

The Yorkshire arguments rose again, with the parties becoming more clearly divided. The Leeds Radicals decided that ³⁰

ultra Tory though he was in name, [Oastler] possessed genuine Radical feelings [and] . . . was a real friend to the best interests of the country.

But as the campaign gathered force, another event affected it. After Gascoigne and Sadler had almost defeated the Reform Bill, Parliament was dissolved on 22 April. Oastler instantly issued his first appeal *To the Working Classes of the West Riding*, urging them to canvass every election candidate and advocating for the first time a 10 hours' day, henceforth the reformers' rallying cry.³¹

Energies were absorbed in May by the General Election, at which Grey's supporters were triumphantly returned; Yorkshire elected four Whigs — Morpeth, Sir John V. B. Johnstone, John Charles Ramsden and George Strickland — without a contest. Sadler was returned at Aldborough, Newcastle's pocket borough, and joined the shrunken Tory group at Westminster. Baines and his friends were jubilant, already planning for the future enfranchisement of the manufacturing towns. The old alliance with Radicalism was breaking, as Baines and Marshall planned a Political Union and an Association for Promoting the Return of Liberal Members. In June the Leeds Tories formed a much less influential True Blue Constitutional Association.

On 18 June Huddersfield reformers, meeting in the Ship Inn, decided to invite Oastler to join the operatives' agitation. Next morning, Brook, Leech, Joshua Hobson, a 21-year-old weaver, Lawrence Pitkeithley, a tradesman, Samuel Glendinning, a woollen merchant, and John Hanson, a 'fancy weaver', visited Fixby and persuaded Oastler to miss church to hear them. Oastler was 'struck with their intelligence and civility [and] . . . knowledge', but, as a 'Church and King Tory', preferred to work separately. However, he finally

agreed to join a non-political alliance. This 'Fixby Compact' introduced Oastler to the working-class world and eventually made him a leader of a large movement. 'We agreed to work together', he wrote twenty years later,³²

with the understanding that parties in politics and sects in religion should not be allowed to interfere between us. That agreement has never been broken.

Eleven days later Hobhouse presented the petitions, and on 4 July introduced his new Bill, limiting children aged 9 to 18 to 12 hours (9 on Saturdays), abolishing nightwork between 8.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. and ordering strict records.³³ But this trivial reform was constantly opposed by masters' groups during its leisurely passage. Ten Huddersfield firms secretly petitioned against 'all legislative interference . . . [as] injurious to the principles of sound commercial policy', while Huddersfield reformers wrote to individual politicians. Morpeth presented the masters' petition in August, and Leech challenged the firms concerned to public debate; his letter was ignored, and one master denied the whole sense of the petition. After some argument, the Huddersfield committee published a comprehensive pamphlet on their opponents' deception.³⁴ But on 28 September Hobhouse — who had succeeded as 2nd baronet in August — deserted the Bill, accepting all the masters' amendments. The subsequent Act was a legislative shadow, limited to the cotton industry.³⁵

This failure caused an immediate outcry. 'Will you not be furious?' demanded angry Huddersfield reformers: ³⁶

The Bill is lost! Yes, the Bill which was intended to diffuse a gleam of hope amid the Factory's gloom — to relieve 'Slavery's worst slaves' — that Bill is lost! . . .

Baines and Morpeth tried to excuse their Yorkshire Liberal friends, but Oastler blamed them for wrecking the Bill. 'The real friends of tyranny', he wrote,

have put on the mask of philanthropy and, with the cry of 'no slavery', would rivet chains on *your* children, all the time persuading you they are the only 'Liberals' of the day.

The workers must canvass candidates, ministers and masters:

Consider that you must manage this cause yourselves, nor think a single step is taken so long as any constitutional effort is left

untried. Establish, instantly establish, committees in every manufacturing town and village, to collect information and *publish facts*. . . .

Oastler urged that factory reform should dominate everything :³⁷

Let your politics be 'TEN HOURS A DAY, AND A TIME BOOK'; and whoever offers himself as a candidate at any future election, unless he will *solemnly pledge* himself to these two points, REFUSE HIM YOUR SUPPORT! Don't be deceived! You will hear the cries of 'No Slavery', 'Reform', 'Liberal principles', 'No Monopoly', &c. But let your cries be — 'No Yorkshire Slavery', 'No Slavery in any part of the Empire', 'No factory mongers', 'No factory monopolists'.

Hobhouse insisted that the Yorkshiremen had not caused his defeat. His 'principal opponents', he told Oastler, were the Western woolmen and 'the Scotch flax-factors' — who

gave me no hope of a compromise, and sent down so numerous and influential a body of members to the House against me that resistance was hopeless.

He regretted that politics had entered the question, and insisted that 'nothing could be more idle than to talk of the possibility' of a Ten Hours Bill. Hobhouse was surprised that Sadler should support a proposal

so extravagant, which can only end in disappointment . . . [and] will only throw an air of ridicule and extravagance over the whole of this kind of legislation.

Such words were scarcely reassuring, from the Parliamentary leader. But Oastler still blamed Marshall and other Yorkshire masters; and, he told Hobhouse,

That the Factories Bill should now be made a political electioneering question cannot be a matter of *surprise*, and, I think, is not one of regret. . . . I hope the workmen will have the wisdom not to be gulled by the terms Whig, Tory or Radical, but be *determined to support men who support this Bill*.

However ridiculous the Bill might appear, Oastler was convinced that ³⁸

in a very short time, our legislators will hardly believe it was ever possible for a Christian Parliament to refuse such an Act.

Sadler supported Oastler: he 'went much beyond' Hobhouse's Bill, having 'very strong' feelings on the 'excessive

mortality, &c., that the infamous and unnatural factory system occasioned'. Sadler was the type of leader needed by the cause. His 'earnest wish', he told Oastler, 'was to better the condition of the oppressed and degraded part of his fellow creatures'; and he shared Oastler's philosophy: ³⁹

I am entirely with you on all the important topics you mention. . . . The mill-owners, I am aware, are very powerful in Leeds. I meditate nothing but what I think would be for *their* interest, properly understood, if carried into full effect; nothing that I would not gladly submit to, were I one of them.

Oastler delightedly suggested that Sadler should lead the cause at Westminster; and Sadler was optimistic of success: 'I find that the public are ripe for our attempt in behalf of the poor friendless factory victims', he wrote in November, praising Oastler's zeal and courage. Sadler was no timid compromiser: 'the question', he told Oastler,⁴⁰

has never been taken up with sufficient energy in Parliament, and the law as at present carried is not only nothing, but actually worse than nothing. . . . I had rather have no bill at all than one that would legalise and warrant excessive labour.

He regretted that Hobhouse had yielded to the political economists, 'the pests of society and persecutors of the poor . . .'. Oastler now suggested that Sadler should contest the Parliamentary borough of Leeds, soon to be created under the Reform Bill.

The approaching 'Reform' elections affected all political action and heightened the bitterness of controversy. In April Baines refused correspondence from Oastler, unless paid for as advertisements. He accused Oastler of Tory electioneering for ruinous 'Utopian projects'. Oastler himself continued to assail local masters for their part in defeating Hobhouse.⁴¹ Two days before the Lords rejected the Reform Bill, in October, Huddersfield reformers planned an extended campaign, soliciting trade union help at the election thought to be 'at hand', urging workers to canvass politicians and urgently appealing for funds.⁴² And Oastler published detailed evidence of cruelty and long hours in Huddersfield mills, angrily asking,⁴³

This is not Slavery, is it? The man is intemperate, is he, who exposes this accursed system? I am not speaking of things afar

off. This is no West Indian cruelty. It is practised upon individuals who reside within a mile from where I am writing. Practised by men called Christian, by 'Liberals' of the 19th century. What are the ministers of religion doing? Would that they would raise their voices and resolutely interfere for these their lambs.

V

The prospective Liberal candidates for Leeds were John Marshall, the second son of the flax millionaire, and T. B. Macaulay, the rising Whig lawyer, who had already crossed literary swords with Sadler. Macaulay's support rose dramatically in September, when Richard Watson, a national Wesleyan leader, urged Methodists to support him, as a negro emancipationist. This indication of a Wesleyan move from Jabez Bunting's alignment of democracy with sin started a religious bitterness which continued through the fifteen months' campaign. An anonymous Methodist even accused Sadler of hypocrisy over slavery and reform.⁴⁴

In reply to angry Liberal campaigning for Parliamentary Reform, Sadler advocated wide social reform; and he attacked Baines' 'calumnies and misrepresentations'.⁴⁵ Oastler envisaged vast possibilities in the contest. For different reasons, both Tories and Radicals disliked the Reform Bill; and, if Sidmouth's repression and Paineite Jacobinism were forgotten, Tory paternalism and Radical 'socialism' might well combine to demand State intervention in industry. In the autumn Leeds Radicals broke with Baines, and in November Hunt advised them to support Sadler, who was 'ten thousand times more disposed to assist the working class' than Macaulay. Working-class Radicals soon formed their own Political Union under John Ayrey, supporting both factory and political reform; the Liberals retaliated with a rival union. The *Intelligencer* claimed, with some reason, that Sadler would gain 'if a still lower class of voters were admitted under the Bill'. Baines raved at the 'contemptible trickery' of the Tory alliance with his erstwhile supporters, but a similar break with Liberalism occurred at Manchester; and on 5 November Huddersfield Radicals addressed Sadler as not only 'a friend, but also . . . a father who was ever wishful to promote the welfare and happiness of his children'. Sadler reaffirmed his support for 'that

class which alone creates the wealth and constitutes the strength of this great and powerful Empire'. The *Leeds Patriot* congratulated the Huddersfield men, advising them to 'continue to distinguish their real from their pretended friends'. Such alliances, wrote Cavie Richardson of Leeds, were ⁴⁶

most honourable to all parties. In what are they agreed? To resist the oppressor and to deliver the oppressed. It is only on this ground that they meet. Sadler is a Tory, Oastler is a Tory, Perring is a Tory and Foster is a Radical Reformer. But, noble-minded men, they lay aside their differences for a while to maintain the cause of the poor.

In November Leeds Tories formally asked Sadler to contest the borough.

In preparation for Sadler's Bill, the four Short Time Committees formed additional branches and published considerable literature. They planned to rouse support throughout the Riding for Sadler, who was granted leave, on 15 December, to introduce his Ten Hours Bill. An enthusiastic meeting of mill delegates opened the campaign in the Union Inn at Leeds on 10 December. The *Mercury* had just attacked Oastler, so the operatives brought the Baineses to debate with him before an excited audience. The two editors followed normal contemporary economic arguments: a 10 hours' day would mean lower wages, higher prices, lost exports and ultimate ruin. Taylor replied for the committee, and Oastler, in his first speech on factory reform, scored an oratorical triumph by appealing from economics to morality. The meeting closed with the chastened elder Baines seconding the proposal of thanks to Oastler.⁴⁷

A large-scale campaign was planned at Fixby, to bring the proposal before public attention. On Boxing Day a large assembly gathered in the Huddersfield school-rooms, to hear Oastler, Brook, Hanson, Pitkeithley and Richard Oglesby, curate of Woodhouse and the first supporting clergyman. The resolutions represented various stages of the argument: a condemnation of long hours, a proposal for regulation, a demand for the Ten Hours Bill, a description of the educational and other benefits of such legislation, and finally a petition in Sadler's support. Again Oastler gave authentic details of local conditions, exhibiting a heavy strap used to beat children who

were late for work. This speech established him as the hero of the Huddersfield working classes.

On the following day nearly 2000 Bradfordians rallied in the Exchange Buildings. J. C. Boddington, the curate of Horton, Joseph Woodhall, chairman of the local committee, Rand and Thompson condemned long hours. But Oastler's 'Ten Hours' speech was interrupted by Thompson, who thought the proposal went too far; he and Rand could only agree to an 11 hours' day, claiming, with William Murgatroyd, that the Bill would cause unemployment and wage reductions. Taylor retorted that what was morally wrong could not be economically right; and Wood supported him, along with William Sharp, a local surgeon, and Dr. William MacTurk. Rand, who had denied reports of children's ill-health, announced himself converted, and members of the committee proceeded to carry further resolutions. An important new convert was gained in G. S. Bull, a stocky, active little clergyman of 32. He had joined the Royal Navy at 10, taught for the Church Missionary Society in Sierra Leone and been ordained in 1824, serving curacies in Hessle and Hanging Heaton, before arriving in Bradford, as curate of Bierley. He was already well known as an Evangelical and Temperance speaker and an ardent supporter of the National Society, Sunday schools and Anglican organisation in the industrial cities.⁴⁸ His impromptu, fervent speech to the cheering audience on 27 December showed that the Movement had gained a valuable new leader.

A still greater rally was held at Leeds on 9 January 1832, when 12,000 people crowded the Mixed Cloth Hall yard, under the Tory Mayor, William Hey. Full expositions were given of both sides of the argument. The vicar, Richard Fawcett, and the Rev. Richard Hamilton, an Independent minister who 'hated oppression, whether at the Equator or at the Poles', condemned overworking, and Foster answered an operative who feared wage reductions. Thackrah spoke for 'Ten Hours', giving details of industrial ill-health :

the system tends to produce a weak, stunted and short-lived race.
 . . . I think ten hours is enough, and too much.

Oastler seconded, with a magnificent combination of indictment and hope :

That machine which cannot afford good and comfortable wages to the man who works with it is a curse to the country. . . . It seems very strange to me that we should be cutting and carving to starve ourselves for the purpose of giving Frenchmen, Dutchmen or Russians a cheaper piece of cloth than they can make themselves. . . .

Marshall, constantly interrupted, 'could not admit that the children in [his] manufactory were suffering materially' — a statement which provided incentive for investigation of the Marshall mills. Samuel Smith, a Tory surgeon at the Infirmary and Oastler's school-friend, gave an instant reply: the cost of providing supports for cripples was very high at his hospital, and he had recently treated a girl whose spine was permanently distorted by working 14 hours daily, with 65 minutes' interval, at Marshall's mills. William Hirst, Hammond, Sadler, Taylor and Pitkeithley spoke in support.⁴⁹

The Leeds meeting ended amid great enthusiasm, and a crowd subsequently cheered outside Sadler's house and the *Intelligencer* and *Patriot* offices, and hissed at the *Mercury* premises. An astonishing change had been wrought in local politics and the Factory Movement was now a new force. Its campaign continued at Keighley on 30 January, when Weatherhead, Oastler, Bull, Gillett Sharpe, a local overseer of the poor, Joseph Firth, a child worker for eight years, Foster and Brook spoke in a chapel. Here Oastler condemned the 'horrid Malthusian doctrine' and declared that ⁵⁰

it was improper that a child in its youth should work longer than 10 hours a day, if it was expected that that child should be a good subject under the Government.

A week later a debate was held in the Dewsbury Sunday-school rooms, where, recorded the *Intelligencer*, opposition was dangerous, as conditions were better and the millowners were personally popular. From the chair, Thomas Cook, a local banker, merchant and manufacturer, declared,

I doubt the sincerity of Mr. Sadler . . . I think he is only making this a 'clap-trap' in order to get in for Leeds.

He supported some limitation, but could not accept the Bill; and even Halliley agreed with him, in a speech full of attacks on Corn Laws, agriculturalists and the Church. Frederick Reyroux, the local curate, who had condemned long hours,

was rescued by Oastler, 'the Atlas of the Sacred Question', along with Bull and the Radical Matthew Crabtree; and the meeting ended triumphantly.⁵¹

The final meeting, at Halifax on 6 March, was expected to be still more difficult. Here, under the energetic Akroyds, were the most bitter opponents of legislation, the worst conditions, the most cowed operatives. Despite stormy weather, over 7000 people assembled at the Piece Hall, where the rally opened with a message from the popular preacher, 'Billy' Dawson. A succession of speeches followed from Abraham Whitehead of Holmfirth, a 'Ten Hours' organiser, Hanson, Foster and Doherty. Oastler bitterly assailed local masters, readily recognised as the Akroyds, and attacked his old opponent, Charles Musgrave, the pluralist vicar: the Primate had recently declared for the Bill, and elsewhere the clergy were 'our best friends', but Musgrave refused all help. Crabtree and his brother, Mark, proposed that petitions be sent to the Duke of Sussex and Strickland, and the meeting in the very citadel of opposition ended with ringing cheers for Sadler and Oastler.⁵²

VI

Though successful, the meetings raised but a small voice amid the complex pattern of agitations early in 1832. Other means of publicity must be adopted. New committees had been founded at Dewsbury, Halifax, Bingley, Batley, Gomersal, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth, Morley and Sheffield, to canvass local support and collect information. Donations from Oastler and Wood allowed them to reprint the *Intelligencer* reports of each rally. And the Movement was now creating considerable interest in the Press and publishing a varied range of literature. At Bradford, Bull published a *Respectful and Faithful Appeal . . . on behalf of the Factory Children*, listing the evils of the system in preventing education and religious instruction, its bad effects on home life and morals and the tyranny it allowed to many masters:

the possession of power, without sufficient responsibility or control, is enough to make any man a despot or extortioner.

The pamphlet was very successful and was reprinted within days, explaining that Bull's 'great aim was to procure relief for

the children and due respect for the labouring classes'.⁵³ A Halifax worker answered the masters' objections, asserting that predictions about losing exports were 'a mere chimera'; and 'Ten Hours', far from reducing employment, would 'equalise' it. If industry really depended on

the small sacrifice of the children's meal-times . . . our commerce is based on a truly sandy foundation, and the sooner we lose it the better.

He urged fellow-workers to support 'that God-like measure'.⁵⁴ When Baines claimed that Sadler's Bill aimed solely at aiding the larger employers, Taylor replied that both large and small masters were overworking their people and that the Bill would create more employment — an increasingly popular point.⁵⁵

In January Doherty founded the *Poor Man's Advocate* at Manchester, which published weekly condemnations of individual cotton firms and the 'physical as well as moral slavery to which the inmates of these modern hells were reduced'. Another new Manchester journal, *The Union Pilot and Co-operative Intelligencer*, also gave support. *The Times*, *Standard* and *Morning Herald* now became interested, and articles appeared in various journals. Children's overwork, wrote one commentator, reduced strength, shortened life and sapped the mind.⁵⁶ Young John Stuart Mill anonymously advocated 'a law interdicting altogether the employment of children under 14 and females of any age in manufactories' — a proposal against which Todmorden women operatives soon protested.⁵⁷ Propaganda was also published in cheap tracts and currently popular sentimental verses, mainly on the children. John Nicholson, the alcoholic 'Airedale Poet', gave his support, but was later hired by Baines to rhyme the hostile case, in a poem on *The Factory Child's Mother*, affirming that

the workhouses would fill
And pauperism would follow SADLER'S BILL.

This provoked one James Ross, a Leeds operative, to perpetrate a saga entitled *The Factory Child's Father's Reply to the Factory Child's Mother*: he

could not but despise the turpitude of the man who would sacrifice his principles and his feelings to a little paltry gain.

A large range of similar writing appeared, produced by authors as varied as Anne Strickland and Wildman.⁵⁸

The committees were increasingly active. Keighley reformers instantly denounced a 'hole and corner meeting' of Bingley masters, designed to 'frustrate the designs of Humanity and Justice', and rejected any compromise : ⁵⁹

A Ten Hours Bill is our Bill ; a Twelve Hours Bill is their Bill, which means no Bill at all ! Remember ! Our Cause is the Cause of the Poor ; and the Cause of the Poor is THE CAUSE OF GOD !

A ladies' committee was formed at Huddersfield, and another new development began at Leeds, where a general committee was established, in addition to the operatives' organisation. The vicar was the president and the committee included Perring, Foster, two clergymen, Robert Hall (a local Tory leader) and Samuel Smith. Taylor shared the secretaryship with William Osburn, an Evangelical Tory wine-merchant, Sunday school superintendent, Egyptologist and Poor Law overseer.⁶⁰ This was the first attempt to organise middle-class support.

In Lancashire and Cheshire committees had been formed at Ashton, Bolton, Bury, Chorley, Chorlton, Lees, Oldham, Preston, Stockport and Wigan by the Manchester group, which became the Central Committee. They soon established connections with the Yorkshire organisation. 'Mr. Oastler is a Tory in politics', wrote Doherty,⁶¹

But when, we ask, will any of your boasting 'liberals' or professing Whigs contribute a tithe of the service which Mr. Oastler has here rendered to the cause of suffering humanity ?

But not all Lancashire reformers supported the 10 hours' restriction ; experienced in Factory Acts and cynical about enforcement, they were more concerned to stop the moving power at specific times, to ensure observance of the law. Oastler told them that,⁶²

I should greatly rejoice to have the moving power *stopped*. This, however, we dare not ask for.

Nevertheless, several manufacturers, unwillingly convinced that legislation was imminent, asked Government to include such a restraint in any Act. Despite their different attitude, the

Lancashire men created a strong organisation, headed by James Turner, the central chairman, a spinner and Sunday school teacher, and Thomas Daniel, the operative secretary. Powerful support was gained from Doherty, Whittle of the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* and from three masters, Charles Hindley of Ashton, Joseph Brotherton of Salford and John Fielden of Todmorden. Yorkshire reformers soon established a similar central committee at Leeds, with Taylor as secretary. Oastler was the central figure, controlling large funds from his savings and Wood's donations.

Scottish workers also joined the campaign. The Dundee operatives formed a committee with John Galletly, secretary of the local Political Union and editor of the *Dundee Advertiser* — a rare Liberal supporter — as secretary. But there was a serious cleavage between the millworkers, who supported Sadler's Bill, and ancillary workers, who feared its effects and tried to compromise with the masters.⁶³ Blairgowrie overseers favoured reform, and 'rather a stormy discussion' between masters and operatives resulted in a majority vote for the Bill.⁶⁴ At Glasgow, Doherty's friend, Patrick McGowan, rallied the cotton workers, two of whom, William Smith and James M'Nish, visited France to discover the facts about foreign competition. Other Glasgow workers thought of enforcing a 10 hours' day by direct action, but M'Nish dissuaded them, while two workers canvassed all local masters.⁶⁵ At Aberdeen petitions were organised by two ministers, Dr. James Kidd, Professor of Oriental Languages at Marischal College, and Abercrombie Lockhart Gordon of Greyfriars' Church.⁶⁶ They were supported by 26 ministers, 2 Episcopalian priests and 1 Roman Catholic. At Dundee 20 surgeons, 14 ministers, 3 teachers and the Episcopalian priest supported petitions, and at Arbroath 11 ministers, 6 surgeons, 12 teachers and the Episcopalian priest.⁶⁷ Nineteen Fifeshire flax masters suggested a 72 hours' week; but this was the best reform possible, and most employers insisted that 'overworking was unknown in Scotland, and the Bill was therefore unnecessary'. Although Dundee masters — while considering that the Bill 'proposed to limit the working time too much' — offered 66 hours (as opposed to Sadler's 58), Fife employers were almost all hostile, especially at Kirkcaldy. And the cotton, flax and linen

manufacturers of Glasgow all sent opposing petitions.⁶⁸ Scotland was to remain a difficult area for the reformers for many years.

English opposition also remained strong. In February Stockport masters compelled operatives to sign their petitions; Doherty was shocked to find that 'a large majority . . . were actually opposed to Mr. Sadler's Bill'. Holland Hoole, a Salford manufacturer, used the same compulsion in the Lambert, Hoole and Jackson works, dismissing the single worker who refused, one Charles Aberdeen.⁶⁹ Hoole himself defended the cotton industry to Lord Althorp, Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Commons. Only 'philanthropists, so called, who knew little or nothing of the subject', turbulent operatives and demagogues wanted legislation; the mills were not overheated or unhealthy, and workers were well paid — Hoole's own 768 workers received an average wage of 9s. 3d.⁷⁰ An anonymous manufacturer bluntly told Hobhouse that he had 'been imposed upon by exaggerations and misstatements', and claimed that 'the factory was, to many of its inmates, frequently a palace', while factory labour 'improved the faculties and intellect of the population'. Legislation would end the employment of all children — 'perhaps the most cruel stroke to the poor man which could have been inflicted'. Furthermore,

this threatened invasion of the rights of the parent over the child [was] an infringement of the liberty of the subject and a direct violation of the homes of Englishmen . . . a reversion to the rude and barbarous legislation of Lycurgus . . . [which] out-Heroded Herod [and] . . . saddled the British operative with an idle, unprofitable family until they were 9 years old.

Legislation would reduce wages and reduce production 'in direct proportion to the curtailment of the hours'; it was a political ramp.⁷¹

Thus the masters' case developed: legislation would increase prices, reduce profits, waste capital, lose trade and cause ultimate starvation. Many writers condemned taxation and the Corn Laws as the causes of long hours, and attacked the reformers' alliance. 'Mr. Sadler is an anti-reformer', wrote one anonymous author,⁷²

and he hopes by this Bill of his to set the master manufacturers and their men by the ears, and get quit of the Reform Bill.

The Master Cotton Spinners' Association levied subscriptions from its members to finance opposition, and Yorkshire masters planned to send petitions and delegations to Westminster.

The reformers originally had no intellectual argument against their opponents' selections from Smith, Bentham and the 'Classical Economists'. But the existence of the strange, extending alliance of Left and Right contained the seeds of a philosophy. Some proletarian Radicals still dreamed of pre-factory Golden Ages. Already deserting Whiggism as the Reform Bill's terms became known, they were undeterred by the theoretic niceties of fashionable economists. Similarly, many Northern Tories retained something of a Tudor outlook on State interference. To them, agricultural Protection appeared natural; the protection of operatives involved no new principle. Aristocratic disdain of the *nouveaux-riches* doubtless affected some. But the allegiance of both Tory manufacturers and Tory operatives suggests that factory reform was more than merely part of the alleged struggle between Land and Industry. From the unlikely Tory-Radical alliance, the reformers gradually fashioned startling political creeds.

CHAPTER THREE

CRISIS

DURING the early months of 1832 both sides prepared their ground at Westminster. Sadler lashed the Reform Bill's 'uniformity of disfranchisement (of) the lower and most industrious classes'. Hunt described children working in 90 degrees of heat for 16 hours daily and industrial cripples 'treated worse than dogs'; and Sir Charles Burrell spoke of tired children falling into machinery. Stewart-Mackenzie, however, maintained that the Bill would reduce wages by 35 per cent; and Ministers insisted that further enquiry was necessary. Sadler spoke regularly of children working up to 18 hours, often through the night and on Sundays; wealthy masters 'ought to have some regard for the poor individuals through whom they accumulated their wealth'. On 6 February he met the Duke of Sussex, the fifth son of George III, and induced the Prince to present reformers' petitions in the Lords.¹ Dr. Howley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, also announced his support, while presenting a Rochdale petition.²

The committees' campaign reached its climax early in March. 'The great difficulty', explained the *Manchester Advertiser*, was 'to persuade sages like Mr. Hume to pass laws to restrain free labour'; therefore Sadler sought only to protect children.³ Oastler wrote to a Manchester rally on 14 March that,

no person can *positively* say what the effect on wages will be; generally speaking, they scarcely can be less, because they are now at starving point. . . .

He pointed to support from the Primate, the Bishop of London, the Methodists Dawson and Daniel Isaacs, the dissenter Hamilton, the Roman Catholic O'Connell and the Quaker William Allen. The Movement was primarily a moral protest: 'robbery and murder *may be profitable*', wrote Oastler, 'but woe to the man who is enriched thereby!' ⁴ The religious convic-

tions and motives of so many of the reformers exercised a great effect on the Movement. The Wesleyan class-meeting and Wilberforce's emancipationist agitations provided organisational models; and sentimental piety greatly influenced many publications. Strangely, the larger Methodist and dissenting bodies generally opposed factory reform, professing suspicion of ulterior 'High Church' motives. Oastler was originally shocked at this enmity, but later ascribed it to the power of chapel-building manufacturers.⁵

The reformers were active in many ways. Bolton operatives, for instance, petitioned both Lords and Commons, corresponded with groups as far away as Glasgow, organised local meetings and sent a delegate to London, who claimed to have converted Sussex and the Primate.⁶ But, despite great care, political divisions had developed over reform. Parliamentary reformers, now nearing their victory, generally opposed industrial legislation, while Tories and Radicals largely supported it. The *Liberal Dundee Advertiser* uneasily noted that Sadler's Bill was 'a pet measure of the Tories' and that 'the Tories everywhere had come forward as the champions of the operatives . . . [and] any opposition . . . had come from Whigs or Radicals', but consoled itself by attacking the Tories' motives. 'The Whigs and "Liberals" seem determined', declared Doherty,⁷

that the factory bill shall be a party question, for they obstinately refuse to join in procuring it. The attainment of the bill has been left entirely to the Tories and Radicals.

After initial suspicion, he had become a close friend of Oastler; and through March he and the Lancashire men organised a series of meetings. They persuaded some Manchester masters to end nightwork and publicised Ashton 'factory abominations'.⁸ The remnants of Doherty's spinners' union early allied with the Short Time organisation, while the comparatively new 'Yorkshire Trades Union' was of little importance in the campaign.

At Leeds, Taylor solicited Macaulay's views. In 1830 Macaulay had extolled the benefits of industry, in a review of Southey's *Colloquies*, condemning 'the intermeddling of Mr. Southey's idol, the omniscient and omnicompetent state' and propounding a complete *laissez-faire* doctrine.⁹ Now, perhaps

thinking of the impending contest at Leeds, he rather altered his views: 'he was decidedly favourable to the principle of Mr. Sadler's Bill', he told Taylor, thinking that 'the hours of labour of children ought to be regulated'. But Macaulay opposed the Bill, as its 'machinery' was defective and 'its effects would . . . most seriously injure the labourers'. He could not accept the comparison with negro slaves, for ¹⁰

the freeman cannot be forced to work to the ruin of his health. If he works over hours, it is because it is his own choice to do so. The law should not protect him, for he can protect himself. The case of a child bears nearer analogy to the case of a slave. . . . I would limit the hours of labour for a child of 13 or 14. But why the hours of labour of a youth in his twentieth year should be limited, as proposed by Mr. Sadler's Bill, I cannot understand.

This doctrine of the 'free agency' of adult workmen was to be heard hundreds of times during the following years.

I

On 16 March 1832 Sadler proposed his Bill in the Commons, with an oration of three hours' practical Evangelical doctrine. His purpose was to rescue children from 'that over-exertion and long confinement' which was

utterly inconsistent with the improvement of their minds, the preservation of their morals and the maintenance of their health.
...

Legislation was an evil, but was essential; even adults were not 'free agents':

The boasted freedom of our labourers in many pursuits will, on a just view of their condition, be found little more than a name.

Previous legislation was 'a dead letter', and further enquiry was unnecessary; Sadler cited many medical opinions against long hours and demonstrated a thong used to beat factory children:

We speak with execration of the cart-whip of the West Indies, but let us see this night an equal feeling rise against the factory-thong of England.

He asked the House to consider the future social consequences. Crime, drunkenness and immorality were rife in the industrial areas, and 'many of the mills . . . [were] little better than brothels'; an unhealthy, stunted, short-lived race was rising. Sadler proposed to prohibit employment under 9, limit children under 18 to 10 hours' labour (and 8 on Saturdays) and to forbid nightwork for all under 21. In order not to antagonise opponents, he omitted plans to fine millowners whose negligence caused accidents, to educate children and to abolish nightwork.

Sadler quoted recent Orders in Council, abolishing nightwork and establishing a 9 hours' day (6 for children), with 40 days' annual holidays, for negro slaves; he asked that English children should be considered as favourably as African adults. And he scathingly denounced wealthy Liberal manufacturers' claim that agricultural Protection restricted their benevolence:

Can any man be fool enough to suppose that, were the Corn Laws abolished tomorrow and every grain we consume grown and ground in foreign parts, such individuals would cease to grind the faces of the poor?

He denied that wages, production and prices were automatically and proportionately linked to working hours, and dismissed arguments on foreign competition as nonsense; furthermore, his Bill would spread employment and give workers more leisure. It was Sadler's greatest speech.

In the debate Hunt supported Sadler, declaring that all his constituents favoured the Bill —

but even if they had desired me to oppose it, I should have refused, as I would rather have resigned my seat in this House than have done so.

Lord William Lennox considered the factory system 'a disgrace to a civilised country', and Strickland and Lord Nugent also favoured reform. But the masters' representatives spoke of foreign rivalry and the danger of capital exports to evade legislation. Lord Althorp had already told Sadler that detailed enquiry was necessary. He considered that Sadler might have exaggerated and that the 'utmost caution' was needed. Althorp could not even promise legislation if the enquiry was favourable. But Sadler was compelled to submit his Bill to a Parliamentary Committee.¹¹

II

The disappointed Northern reformers strongly condemned the Committee's appointment. *The Times* had already warned that while it would be difficult to persuade 658 Members 'against the plain dictates of justice and humanity', it would be 'no very great task' to convince a small Committee largely composed of sympathisers. 'We dread the operations of the Select Committee', wrote the *Dundee Advertiser*,

. . . because the operatives . . . have not the same opportunities as the masters, their opponents, of bringing forward evidence and running about manœuvring amongst members capable of being influenced.

Reformers could not understand, Oastler later declared, 'why they should be put to such expense to prove that which was self-evident'.¹² The *Union Pilot* summed up workers' anger, asking,

What sort of a House of Commons is it, either for intelligence or humanity, which requires specific evidence to show it is improper and inhuman to place children under 9 . . . in the harness of fatiguing and unwholesome labour . . . ?

Sadler had only accepted the Committee under strong Government pressure, as Morpeth later admitted.¹³

Detailed preparations soon began. Blaming wealthy opponents for the enquiry, the committees appealed for funds to send witnesses to Westminster. The Huddersfield and Holmfirth committees maintained optimism by announcing that 'a Committee are about being formed [*sic*] of the greatest Men in existence in London'. A confidential memorandum was issued on the preparation of evidence, warning that 'any pretended or assumed statements which cannot be fully and clearly substantiated by considerable evidence, would materially mar the cause'. Local committees were told to collect evidence under nineteen headings, covering every aspect of factory life and labour, and to select witnesses who, 'from their personal knowledge, could depose as to the greatest variety of facts'.¹⁴

The Parliamentary Committee originally had 30 members

and later 37. Sadler was the chairman, and supporters included Strickland, Attwood and Sir Robert Inglis. Opponents included Morpeth, Thomas Gisborne and Poulett Thomson, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade; and other members included Hobhouse and Peel. Between 12 April and 7 August, 87 witnesses were heard on 43 days. The evidence amounted to a massive indictment of industrial conditions.

Children's conditions were described in detail by a succession of broken operatives. 'I had 14½ hours' actual labour, when 7 years of age', declared the crippled Joseph Habergam, 'and the wage . . . was 2s. 6d. per week. . . . Strapping was the means by which children were kept at work.' Benjamin Gummersall was crippled by working 13 or 14 hours daily at Bradford from the age of 9, and another cripple, Elizabeth Bentley, had been a Leeds flaxworker at 6. Samuel Coulson, a Stanningley tailor, told of Leeds girls working from 3 a.m. to 10 p.m., with one hour's interval, for 6-weekly periods, for wages of 3s. 7½d. Six witnesses described conditions in Marshall's mills, and one Hannah Brown spoke of 14 hours' labour daily and beatings personally administered by Ackroyd, who allowed no official meal intervals. Children not only worked long hours, but even spent intervals in cleaning machinery; and, declared one trade unionist, Abraham Whitehead, 'some had been beaten so violently that they had lost their lives'.

Bull and Gordon spoke of the social and moral effects of long toil. Gordon noted the 'wan and sickly appearance' of children attending his night-school, and William Urquhart of Dundee 'knew for certain that most of the women who became prostitutes were once factory girls'. A formidable collection of medical men gave evidence. Children worked longer than negro slaves, declared Dr. John Farre, and 'the profit thus gained was death to the child'. Sir Anthony Carlile condemned 'this sin against nature and humanity', and Sir William Blizard lamented its 'horrible' effects. 'The children', asserted Benjamin Brodie, 'not being free agents, deserved protection as much as the West Indian negroes.' Other medical witnesses, with local experience of factory conditions, were Sharp of Bradford, Smith and Thackrah of Leeds, Thomas Young of Bolton and John Malyn of Manchester.

Most of the Short Time leaders also gave evidence. John Hall described conditions in Wood's factory, which Sharp inspected weekly. Wildman of Keighley asserted that

the general cry of the West Riding was that there was too much production, that there was over-production.

M'Nish described conditions in Glasgow, where child-workers were 'pale and emaciated at every age, from 9 upwards'. John Hannam, the Leeds chairman, told of his working life from the age of 10, and Firth of Keighley spoke of working at 6. Turner and Daniel represented Manchester, and Hanson Huddersfield; and Charles Aberdeen spoke as a former child apprentice from Westminster.

On 9 July Osburn revealed that six witnesses had been dismissed for giving evidence. Complaining bitterly of such vindictive reprisals, Sadler announced on 30 July that he would call no more operatives. When Parliament was prorogued on 16 August his detailed evidence was complete. The masters' rejoinder had not been heard when Parliament was dissolved, so it was ultimately decided to publish the 682 pages of evidence without comment.¹⁵

While newspapers and politicians professed abhorrence at the witnesses' stories, hostile masters replied in various ways: the tenets of *laissez-faire* were invoked, witnesses were victimised and evidence was impugned. 'The state of health of cotton mill workers was at least equal to any other portion of the manufacturing community', claimed Lancashire masters. Reformers were trying, '*nominally* in favour of children, to repress all exertion and reduce the whole to one deadening level.' In any case, it was impossible to decide the issue in London: 'personal enquiry' in the field, by impartial Commissioners, was 'the only satisfactory method of setting this *Quaestio vexata* at rest'.¹⁶ This demand was constantly repeated. Parliament should ignore 'tales of sorrow, got up for a Parliamentary Committee', declared Joseph Birley, a cotton master: 'ignorant, meddling enthusiasts and philanthropists' would cripple 'the spirit of enterprise' and drive capital abroad.¹⁷ Every effort was made to discredit Sadler's witnesses, and some writers have rejected their evidence ever since. But those cases specifically attacked were substantiated by contemporaries.¹⁸

The great *Report*, for which Sadler ruined his health, remains a classic social document.

III

Outside Parliament, the Movement continued to develop. In April the long-heralded London 'Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Factory Children' was founded, under the patronage of Sussex. Two Quakers, Allen, the scientist, and Samuel Hoare, the banker, were respectively chairman and treasurer. This 'central point of union' attracted attention but achieved little; Allen lost interest and Sussex 'forgot' to present the petitions. 'By some means', Oastler bitterly recalled, ten years later,¹⁹

(Mr. Pease, late M.P. of Darlington, can best explain why) . . . the Metropolitan Society, patronised by Royalty, was sterile and unfruitful. . . .

But in Yorkshire Oastler planned to demonstrate the Movement's strength by holding a county meeting at York. He called for a large attendance, and Osburn and committee delegates met at Leeds to plan a massive march. 'Rouse yourselves', proclaimed Oastler,

and in one Loud, Long, Thundering Voice, let Yorkshire and all England hear you swear, Your CHILDREN shall be FREE.

Osburn's committee spent some £1500 on ale, bread and cheese and accommodation in barns along the route, and settled the final details on 21 April; strict orders were given against smoking.

Opponents ridiculed the scheme, forecasting riot and pillage. Oastler promised good behaviour to the High Sheriff, Joseph Yorke. When Baines mocked his regal arrogance, Oastler gladly adopted the title of the 'Factory King'.

On Easter Monday, 23 April, gaunt columns left each textile town, with bands and banners. Unemployed operatives, with borrowed boots and blankets as coats, marched with each contingent. Oastler led off the Huddersfield battalion at 6 a.m., singing the National Anthem; they joined the Holmfirth, Heckmondwike, Gomersal, Birstall, Batley, Morley, Churwell and Dewsbury men on the Leeds road. At Bradford Bull

marshalled the reformers, and groups met them from Keighley, Bingley and the industrial villages between Bradford and Leeds. During the afternoon Leeds crowds welcomed 'Divisions' arriving at the White Cloth Hall for food. But an evening drizzle had become a thunderstorm as the first line set off on the York road at midnight. The men marched on, singing through the night; even the *Mercury* noted their 'uncommon zeal and perseverance'. But only Oastler could prevent the muddy ranks from rioting when they reached Knavesmire in the morning, to find their provisions missing. The weary columns marched in four divisions, led by Oastler and Pitkeithley, with bands, standards and 'bodyguard', through Micklegate Bar and the ancient city, to the Castle Yard. Five hours of oratory followed, from the Tories Sadler, Oastler, the Hon. William Duncombe, Hall and John Plumbe Tempest of Tong, the Radicals Foster and Captain Joseph Wood of Sandal, the Whig Strickland, surgeon Smith, the manufacturers Wood and Rand and the operatives Taylor, Pitkeithley and Hanson; and the Church was strongly represented by Bull, Boddington, Fawcett, Benjamin Maddock of Tadcaster and John Graham of York. The meeting's conduct, declared Yorke, was 'worthy of [their] great County'. The long homeward march began in another stormy night, to resting-places at Tadcaster; and on 25 April the column marched, singing the Doxology, into the Leeds White Cloth Hall yard, for a final speech from Sadler. The energetic Huddersfield men ended their 80-mile walk with a dance; and on Saturday the Leeds reformers burned Baines' effigy in retaliation for his sarcasm.²⁰

The York 'pilgrimage' had tremendous effect. It demonstrated the Movement's strength and discipline; and a huge petition was prepared. Even Morpeth, presenting its 138,652 signatures, felt that 'humanity demanded speedy correction of the evil' — which Strickland considered 'a reproach to the country'. Wildman arranged a Sheffield petition in May; Aberdeen clergy sent support; a Halifax petition gained 12,000 supporters and Huddersfield's 10,000.²¹ Propaganda efforts increased. The London Society published an essay on the *Factory System*, 'by one extensively engaged'. Standard 'Resolutions' and petitions were widely distributed. Dialect stories were printed as tracts: 'I'm sure fra what my Cousin

Jemmy says they're worked warse nor t'Neager Slaves i't West Indies', a country visitor was made to say, in a paper advocating 't' liberation o't' white bairn slaves'. A Leeds writer dreamed of sentencing local masters at York Castle; Oastler replied to Hoole; and by June Doherty was addressing appeals to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Sadler himself produced verses on the evidence, following the anti-slavery model, in recording the brutal treatment and ultimate death of negro slaves, but substituting a factory girl.²² In addition to such tear-wringing melodrama, Northern Radicals published robust condemnations of specific 'hell-holes', describing Hoole's mill as 'a complete brothel'. Doherty's *Advocate* led this work, until he was imprisoned for libel in June; but he found it necessary to complain of the weak support of his own union.²³

Dr. James Kay's celebrated description of Manchester conditions became a popular textbook. Kay pointed out the 'necessarily debilitating consequences of uninterrupted toil' and that

While the engine runs, the people must work — men, women and children are yoked together with iron and steam . . . chained fast to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness.

Operatives were 'crowded into one dense mass, in cottages separated by narrow, unpaved and almost pestilential streets'; and they worked 'in an enervating, heated atmosphere . . . frequently loaded with dust or filaments of cotton . . .'.²⁴ Perhaps even more popular was John Brown's harrowing biography of Robert Blinco, the former apprentice, which Doherty republished. Blinco was now a Manchester 'grocer and sheet wadding manufacturer', and his comparative affluence led some writers to doubt his allegations; but he could still show his deformities.²⁵

Meanwhile, the final Reform Bill debates were taking place. The ultra-Radical *Poor Man's Guardian* had condemned the 'tyrannical, infamous, hellish measure', and Doherty spoke of using force to improve it.²⁶ Richardson had warned Leeds Radicals that it 'deprived the poor of every vestige of political existence', giving power to the masters, who were 'chiefly liberals'.²⁷ But the intoxicating allure of Reform was too exciting to be deflected — especially when the Lords opposed

it. On 7 May Lyndhurst's postponing motion was carried, and the last violent agitation began, with the Birmingham men talking of refusing taxes, Place planning a run on gold and Manchester Liberals protesting against the possibility of a Tory Ministry.

On 14 May two groups met in Leeds. Henry Hall's 'True Blue Association' praised the King's stand against the Whigs, while Baines' much larger Liberal organisation threatened to depose him. The mills closed early, and some 30,000 people assembled in the Cloth Hall yard, under a *tricolore* flag. Foster was driven out, though Robert Hall managed to make a Tory protest, as young Baines led the gathering in hissing Wellington, the Bishops and the Queen — for which Oastler never forgave him.²⁸ Reform meetings followed in every West Riding town, and Oastler was sickened to find his operative friends supporting what he regarded as Liberal cant. 'The People do not live in £10 houses', he commented; the Bill enfranchised the factory reformers' strongest opponents. On 7 June it received the Royal Assent.

IV

The reformers were determined that their cause should be fully explained at the forthcoming elections. Their agitation had been drowned by the final Reform rallies, but now there was a chance of making factory reform a dominant issue in the North. On 15 June Leeds Liberals publicly introduced their prospective candidates. The proceedings soon degenerated into a riotous battle between factory reformers and Liberals, and the speakers were driven from the platform to the roof of a stage-coach. Oastler questioned both candidates: Macaulay was evasive and Marshall openly hostile to the Ten Hours Bill. Benjamin Prestage and the operatives thanked Oastler for his help, and his torn coat became a political symbol. Taylor pointed out the moral:

I should like to know what the operatives are to reap from the Reform Bill, if they and their children are to work the exact number of hours which they are *able to bear*.

And the *Intelligencer* thought the affair was 'an assurance of the triumphant success of Mr. Sadler', while Sadler issued a

special address to operative voters.²⁹ Four days later, Joseph Wood, 'a reformer of the Cartwright school', entered Huddersfield as the Radical candidate against the semi-feudal power of the Whig squire, Sir John Ramsden, whose son, John Charles, the Whig candidate, opposed Sadler's Bill. In reply to Oastler, Wood pledged support, thus gaining local Tory and Radical help. Next week, when young Ramsden attacked 'Tory trickery', he was shouted down and resigned the candidature to Captain Lewis Fenton.³⁰

With Tory-Radical alliances organised at Leeds and Huddersfield, Oastler visited Thornhill in London. He explained his work to his employer, claiming that Liberal capitalism would ruin aristocracy and proletariat alike. Thornhill donated £20 and introduced Oastler to the Duke of Rutland, through whom he was invited to meet Wellington. At Apsley House Oastler excitedly urged his hero to lead the Church and nobles 'to rescue the working class from the thralldom and delusion' of bourgeois tyranny. And he defined his own idealised, hierarchic Toryism, which wanted 'a place for everything, and everything in its place' and 'a good day's wages for a fair day's work'. Wellington was apparently interested, for he granted further interviews to both Oastler and Bull. Oastler also appeared before Sadler's Committee and, with Bull, Osburn, Hanson and Daniel Fraser of the Central Committee, met Eldon, Rutland, Sussex and several M.P.s. He returned home excited and optimistic. Before vast Huddersfield crowds on 10 July he announced the support of the great, advocated personal punishment of offending millowners, bitingly answered Ramsden and commended Wood. The affair ended, almost unbelievably, with Radical cheers for Wellington.³¹

During Oastler's absence, Ramsden had announced that 'he knew how to deal with him'; his father complained to Thornhill, who reprimanded his steward for supporting a Radical. Oastler replied that he preferred dismissal to compromise:

I hate Whig politics with a most perfect hatred, because I believe the Whigs to be the enemies of my country and, if not stopped, that they will be the ruin of the nation. They are the great enemies of the Factory Bill, the great supporters of the Factory System, which is fast destroying the Landed Interest and the Labouring Classes. . . . The time is come when all must join

together against the political economists, or this country cannot be saved.

Himself 'slighted by many' as a 'Radical', Sadler strongly supported Oastler :

Any slight or insult offered to the 'King' of our Cause will be taken up by thousands. . . . You were never so great.

The news had 'enhanced his certainty regarding the cause, for he had begun to see it was to have its martyrs . . .'.³²

The factory agitation increasingly merged with Tory-Radical electioneering. Baines sneered at Sadler's 'sublime and beautiful measure' as 'a bill for lowering wages', and published allegations by one M. Lee that the Leeds Short Time Committee had embezzled operatives' money for election purposes. Taylor's reply, rejected by Baines, was published by the *Intelligencer* and *Patriot* and as a broadside. 'We cannot agree', wrote Taylor,

that men who think our children should be enslaved for their benefit, are the most proper persons to represent us in Parliament.

Nor would operatives aid the supporters of

that glorious measure of Reform, whose greatest beauty is that it totally proscribes the Working Classes from the exercise of their Political Rights.

Taylor and Hannam refuted Lee's charges: all subscriptions were forwarded to the Central Committee, and the officials were unpaid. They supported Sadler, as the champion of the Ten Hours Bill, the agricultural workers and the Irish workers.³³ Throughout the North, Parliamentary candidates were canvassed. Hindley, Cobbett and Fielden supported the Bill at Ashton, Manchester and Oldham and Sir George Sitwell in North Derbyshire. Henry Ryder, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, told his clergy, at Derby in August, that Factory and 'Truck' legislation 'both aimed at destroying a virtual tyranny'. Sadler's Bill, declared James Newton, at Stockport, was

a measure dictated by Humanity, calculated to ensure and increase the Comfort and Happiness of the Working Classes, and to

encourage the exercise of parental and filial duties and affections, and thereby of every Religious and Moral Duty.

Cheering operatives heard the Hon. James Stuart-Wortley pledge support at Halifax. Bradford reformers paraded with banners and inscribed hat-bands. And another Tory-Radical alliance was planned at Manchester, where, however, the Tory, John Hope, adopted Liberal objections to Sadler's Bill. The extending 'unholy alliance' disturbed Liberal journals.³⁴

Early in August Marshall and Macaulay announced their policies in Leeds, while Wood triumphantly re-entered Huddersfield, with the Radical General W. A. Johnson and Oastler.³⁵ Sadler had issued an address in June, but now retired to Fixby, to recuperate from overwork. On 22 August over 12,000 Huddersfield workers, with bands and banners, marched to Fixby Park, to meet Sadler, Oastler, Bull, Wood, Robert Hall, William Stocks, chairman of the Huddersfield Political Union, and several clergymen. Brook read an address, assuring Sadler that the operatives were 'not such fools, tools and puppets as to be the satellites of the *Mercury*': if they had votes, 'there was scarcely a borough in Yorkshire or Lancashire that would not return [him]'. Three days later, Oastler, Wood, Bull, Hindley and Perring accompanied Sadler to a great Manchester demonstration by some 100,000 people at Camp Field. At night they attended a 1s. 8d. dinner with 300 supporters. On 29 August they returned to Yorkshire and were met by 20,000 supporters at Bradford, where Oastler bitterly silenced hecklers from Ackroyd's mills.³⁶ After this successful tour, Oastler asked Leeds operatives to protect him from Baines' mobs while he questioned 'Babby Macaulay' at a Liberal rally on 4 September. He promised to ask Baines³⁷

some close questions respecting the barefaced falsehoods he has published about us. . . . I will engage either to make him eat his own words or prove, in your presence, that he deserves the name that Cobbett gave him.

With this promise of excitement to come, the struggle for the representation of Leeds commenced; Sadler made his pre-election entry on 3 September. Welcoming a Manchester petition in favour of Sadler, Doherty prophesied that if he failed at Leeds, the Ten Hours Bill would be lost.

V

Warned by placards against the 'self-destruction' of supporting the local mill-tyrant or a Scottish place-hunter, Sadler's supporters gave him a triumphant reception on 3 September, although their numbers became the subject of controversy. The rally in the Coloured Cloth Hall yard next day soon became riotous, as Sadler's bodyguard, led by Oastler, forced their way to the platform, which they threatened to pull down, if they were barred. Sadler's allies included, the *Mercury* significantly reported,

a procession of operatives of that nondescript and mongrel class betwixt Ultra-Radicals and Ultra-Tories, whom the Ten Hours Bill had induced to abandon their former radical character and to swell the ranks of the anti-reformers and the Leeds Corporation.

Macaulay was interrupted by William Rider, described by Baines as 'a notorious man . . . secretary of the defunct Radical Union'. Then Marshall attacked the Bill:

our trade would be diminished, fewer workpeople would be employed and less wages would be earned.

Sadler concentrated on defining his attitude to the Reform Act, which

falsified its name and *disfranchised* the great mass of the British people. His idea of Reform was that it should truly represent every part of the British Community. ! . .

Finally, Oastler spoke for factory reform, as Liberal groups fought for control of the platform. He gained from Macaulay a statement of his 'strong objection to the details of [the] Bill': it was 'a delusion' to

expect any great or extensive relief from any practical measure of legislation . . . the overworking of children was not the cause but the effect of distress.

Both sides were heated: Liberal opposition to Sadler's Bill and Sadler's own advocacy of a scot-and-lot suffrage were equally derided. But Oastler's aim was achieved: Leeds operatives could no longer doubt Liberal hostility. Rival reports of the event stirred up further controversy.³⁸

The battle continued with mounting bitterness. Cobbett's famous attack on Baines was constantly quoted, and Macaulay assailed Sadler as one 'whose political career had been a struggle against [the People's] rights and liberties'. John Ayrey, President of the Radical Union, supported Sadler, 'the friend of the working classes', against Macaulay, 'the friend of himself'; Ayrey

viewed with suspicion and distrust every man eulogised by [Baines] . . . and considered every man as honest, sincere and patriotic in principle who was maligned and misrepresented by him. . . .

Rider also lampooned Baines for sneering at Sadler's association with 'dirty' operatives. Tory propaganda detailed the enormous public incomes of the Greys and Macaulays, while Baines cast constant doubts on Sadler's sincerity.³⁹ But many cross-currents affected the campaign. A vicious religious argument periodically revived. Gilyard Scarth, a local Methodist minister, answered Watson by claiming that Bunting himself favoured Sadler against the 'Socinian' Marshall.⁴⁰ When vulgar verses appeared on Sadler's operative supporters, 'A Hater of Indecency and Cant' condemned Baines' 'weekly volley of lies and defamation', and urged decent, respectable electors to oppose such men. 'Christian!' called another poster,

You have a duty to perform to God, to the Christian Church, to your country, to your Children, to your town. Support a Christian Candidate.

And one Tory alleged that Marshall was only a lukewarm Emancipationist, while Sadler was long pledged to the negro cause.⁴¹

Liberals retorted to such sallies by claiming that their candidates were Churchmen, while Sadler would support any religion to get votes. Macaulay even called Sadler 'a convenient philanthropist', resembling 'the hyena who, when it wishes to decoy the unwary into its den, has a singular knack of *imitating the cries of little children*'. Immediately, sarcastic 'Sadlerite' papers assailed 'Thomas Babington Hyena', and Bull, in two vitriolic prints, revealed the Macaulay family's unsavoury

African ventures and Baines' misrepresentations. 'I have embraced the children's cause', he told Macaulay,

and if with it I must embrace Poverty, Calumny and Reproach,
God help me to cling to it as tenaciously, until death, as you to
your £1,200 a year.

When Baines reproached 'the reverend bruiser', Bull condemned 'the professedly Christian editors' and told operatives to ⁴²

cling to their *Ten Hours Bill* as tenaciously as Mr. Sadler clung to the Poor Man's Cause, or Mr. Macaulay to his Liberal Paymasters.

Tory election leaflets were even more violent. One sarcastic 'Hyena' poster summarised their charges — and the levels of electioneering: ⁴³

I aspire, you know, to represent *you*, whose Capital marks you out as the favourites of Heaven (pardon my allusion to the Deity — you know *how* to appreciate it). I pledge myself that you shall have full swing. . . . We have, you know, a redundant Population. THIS WE MUST GET QUIT OF. To this end, LONG HOURS and night work in your factories will be greatly conducive — the common HERD are too RANK on the ground. . . . Get your Workhouse Board filled with LIBERAL AND ENLIGHTENED MEN; pine the Paupers to death as decently as may be and then hand their dead Bodies to the DISSECTING ROOM. . . .

The Radical Union, Short Time Committee and Tories combined to aid Sadler. While Tory posters concentrated on attacking Macaulay, thought to be the weaker Liberal candidate, the operatives favoured sarcastic poetry. Macaulay's income was a regular target:

At th' Election, be't fair, rain or squally,
My sweet, pretty face shall appear,
As sure as my name's Tom Macaulay,
And my pension Twelve Hundred a year.

Rider satirised Macaulay in prose, and hoped for 'honest tradesmen',

Who won't obey Neddy, and basely succumb
To Macaulay the Placeman, or Marshall the Dumb.

'A New Song' presented by the Tories commented on Macaulay and his father, Zachary:

Each a Gentleman at large
 Fed and kept at public charge ;
 Tom for India now petitions,
 Dad for *charities* commissions ;
 Charity begins *at home*,
 So thinks Dad and so thinks Tom !

Tory campaigners published a weekly commentary on *The Falsehoods of the Leeds Mercury* and a bright pamphlet, *The Cracker*, which explained that Macaulay

[was] a crackhand at a speech, and [Marshall] had a reputation, in his own mill, of being a crackhand at a whip.

Sadler's social philosophy and Liberal opposition to it caused most disputes. 'You have indeed heard [Marshall] assure you', wrote the Tories,⁴⁴

that 12s. a week is a good wage for a man and his family. . . . If you prefer a dumb dog that cannot bark, vote for Marshall ; if you prefer a ministerial turnspit, vote for Macaulay.

The theme of factory reform lay behind many Tory appeals : ⁴⁵

Marshall is certainly a man of more humanity than Macaulay ; but nevertheless, recollect that his notions of *managing* the poor as he would call it, were acquired exclusively in the *Water Lane Bastiles* [*sic*]. . . . Remember all the miseries, cruelties and wrongs which are endured in Water Lane. . . .

Specific cases of the wretched conditions in Marshall's mills were regularly cited ; and each election issue led to further rhymes. The Tories also attacked the Reform Act, which 'was not the Bill, nor anything like the Bill' promised ; the people had been 'betrayed' by the Whigs.⁴⁶

As polling day approached, the allegations mounted further. The Liberals charged Sadler with extensive corruption and the under-steward of the Earl of Cardigan with threatening Liberal supporters ; the accusations referred to free beer, bribery by Tory aldermen and the employment of 'bludgeon-men'. The Tories retaliated with similar charges.⁴⁷ Constantly, the old attack on Sadler was repeated :

that which made it perfectly amazing that anyone should dream of Mr. Sadler as a member for Leeds was that he was a determined

and irreconcilable foe to the measure by which Leeds would obtain the franchise.

Sadler's election would make Leeds voters 'the laughing stock of England'; he was ⁴⁸

. . . this poor Corporation hack,
This MT thing of *words*, and *wind* and sound.

The public meetings were often rowdy; the Liberals were regularly challenged by Taylor, Ayrey and others, and their theological orthodoxy was often questioned. From September Sadler canvassed the polling districts, while the Liberals held a series of meetings. Commenting on Marshall's claim that high taxation necessitated long hours, Oastler declared,⁴⁹

I think otherwise: I think that the taxes ought not to be found out of [the children's] labour, but out of Mr. Marshall's large mass of gold.

In November there were excited arguments over the revision of the voters' lists; both sides claimed gains. Later in the month more public meetings heard the final charges and counter-charges, as the last stage of the struggle approached.⁵⁰

VI

The Leeds election excited widespread interest. A London writer commended Sadler's election as a blow against Whig nepotism. When a reply attacked Sadler's 'sneaking practices . . . paltry evasions and . . . hypocritical pretences', the same author hoped that. ⁵¹

It cannot be that the Electors of Leeds will prefer a *stranger* and a *placeman* to a *townsman* and a *philanthropist*.

Factory reformers throughout the North sent addresses to the electors. Two thousand Bolton men set the example on 8 October, advising Leeds voters,

Do not suffer the detestable distinctions of party and faction to seduce you from the path of Mercy and Charity.

A Manchester petition, with 40,000 signatures, provided a December climax.

Meanwhile, Oastler continued his efforts to convert Welling-

ton to his own romantic Toryism. 'The natural protectors of the labouring poor', he told the Duke, in July, 'are the owners of the soil.' But the aristocracy blindly 'assisted their deadly enemies, the capitalists, to destroy their best friends, the labourers'. Oastler advocated industrial and agricultural 'Protection', taxation of machinery, measures to reduce unemployment and the discouragement of emigration.⁵² Bull was equally active. In July he appealed to Christian ministers to preach the cause from the pulpit; and he asked agricultural areas to help with prayers, petitions and money. When John Wood opened a school for his 500 children in October, Bull addressed a large assembly, regretfully observing,

How lamentably silent have the Ministers of Religion been. . . .
Why? it is unpalatable to some of *the most respectable*, the *richest* of their congregations. . . .

Such men were 'utterly unworthy of their office'. Bull's challenge was aimed at William Morgan of Christ Church and other local critics. But two weeks later he proudly claimed the support of the Archbishops and a growing number of clergy.⁵³ The Bradford committee asked Archbishop Harcourt of York to lead Northern clerical supporters; and it started to publicise local masters' practices.⁵⁴

Activity mounted throughout the North. New sub-committees were formed at Chorlton and Salford. Cavie Richardson was sent as 'missionary' to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, where he organised meetings on Sadler's Bill, which the Bishop of Lichfield supported. He made a special appeal to the Nottingham ladies, and, when attacked in the local Liberal Press, issued some vigorous pamphlets. As a measure of humanity, the Bill was above politics, he claimed; and Sadler was a philanthropist rather than a politician:

his greatest objection to the Reform Bill itself has been that it placed *all* the poor in Schedule A and totally disenfranchised them.

Richardson regularly quoted evidence to Sadler's Committee.⁵⁵ Support was announced from York and Hull. And when 36 Glasgow Trades held a Reform Jubilee on 28 October, M'Nish's spinners' delegation included child-workers bearing a full-length portrait of Sadler. Seven Glasgow spinners — M'Nish,

McGowan, James Dunn, John Nibblock, Peter Hackett, Lachlin McQuarrie and Robert Crawford — published an open letter for Sadler and an *Address to the Cotton Spinners of the United Kingdom*, soliciting support for his Bill.⁵⁶ Such widely separated towns as Dundee and Coventry sent messages of support; and a Norfolk writer told Dr. Benjamin Drake that 'machinery absorbs the source of labour and drives the currency from circulation into heaps', and called for 'wholesome regulations'.⁵⁷

On 21 September Bull produced the first issue of *The British Labourer's Protector and Factory Child's Friend*, the Movement's first organ. Its policy was

to advocate the legislative restriction of Factory Labour and of Machinery, *where it interferes injuriously with human labour*. To uphold the cause of the labouring poor against the oppressor . . . [and] in doing this, carefully and universally to avoid all party politics.

The *Protector's* principle, wrote Bull, was

that whatever truly benefits the labouring classes benefits the whole community, and that no nation is blessed of God, or prosperous in itself, where they are depressed.

But next week over 20 worsted masters, meeting at Halifax, reaffirmed their hostility to any legislation. And Bull's incessant attacks on apathetic clergy provoked an anonymous minister, 'Verax', to condemn 'this self-elected, self-constituted, self-opinionated Editor'. Children's welfare should be left to parental and Christian benevolence, not to agitators seeking cheap fame; in any case, he wrote, many other classes worked equally long. Oastler replied that he cared nothing for credit, but had never seen 'such a proof of the desperate wickedness of the human heart' as the attack on Bull.⁵⁸ Other journalistic supporters faced more serious difficulties. Doherty was in prison, and his *Advocate* closed in September, though he still published occasional commentaries. 'The coming elections', he asserted,⁵⁹

are to determine whether we are to have cheap government, equal and cheap law, cheap knowledge and security of life and property by peaceful means, or we are to obtain these self-evident rights by the sword,

Foster was charged with libel by Francis Thorpe, a Knaresborough master, and, although the York Assizes left the matter to be settled out of court, faced costs of over £200. Oastler and the *Intelligencer* helped to raise funds, but the affair was to have a later importance.⁶⁰

Early in December Weatherhead's Keighley committee urged Oastler to contest the West Riding, against the Whigs, Morpeth and Strickland. The prospects were hopeless and the proposal drew Liberal sarcasm :

As Whigs, we have been accused of being levellers ; but never did we contemplate turning the House of Commons into an almshouse for decayed tradesmen. . . .

Nevertheless, Oastler prepared an address on 12 December, surveying his ideals :

I am *not* of the present school of 'Political Economists', 'Free Traders', 'Liberals', so called ; 'Emigration Boards and Committees' I detest — I contend that the Labourer has the *right* to live on his Native Soil. . . . The Altar, the Throne and the Cottage should share alike in the protection of the Law. . . .

He supported the Church, property taxation, industrial and agricultural Protection, an isolationist foreign policy and social reform. 'Shall the Law refuse to protect the only property of the Poor, HIS LABOUR, because some few, unjust, unprincipled men refuse to pay its value?' he asked. 'I maintain the Law *must* interfere . . .'.⁶¹

At the Bradford election the Tory George Banks made the Ten Hours Bill 'the most prominent feature in his political programme'. He was opposed by two Liberals, John Hardy, an ironmaster and barrister who later became a Tory, and Ellis Cunliffe-Lister, a manufacturer and landowner who founded a famous industrial dynasty and resolutely opposed reform. 'If any of you, Gentlemen', wrote Bull,⁶²

can find it in your hearts to propose a longer period than Ten Hours for the actual labour of Children and Young Persons above 9 and under 18, when convicted felons only work 9 hours on average and when the children of our Colonial Slavery . . . have even a greater legal protection afforded . . . I hope from my very heart that you may never represent the Borough of which I am an Elector,

At Huddersfield Joseph Wood combined support for the Bill with a militantly Radical programme.⁶³ John Fielden and William Cobbett (who also contested Manchester) both supported legislation at Oldham, and Charles Hindley, a Moravian manufacturer, was a sympathetic candidate at Ashton. Elsewhere, a miscellaneous collection of Radicals could be counted as supporters, along with the closely knit Tory groups in each manufacturing town.

VII

Both sides professed confidence at Leeds. 'I have no doubt of success', Oastler told Daniel. But most operative supporters had no votes, while Liberal supporters, as Macaulay told his sister, were 'very honest substantial manufacturers' and Ten-pounders. Bull had already pointed out that hostile masters were supported by 'their family connections and their business connections, and their middlemen and their subalterns'. In any case, there were many other topics of interest to Northern burghers in the first Reform election. Sadler claimed to be 'confident'.⁶⁴ But he had little ground for such optimism.

The three candidates spoke against deafening heckling on nomination day, 10 December, when Sadler's allies again included both Tories and Radicals: the *Mercury* was shocked that Hall and William Beckett (who proposed Sadler) 'allowed themselves to be elbowed by such fellows as Ralph Taylor and John Ayrey'. But the Liberals won the show of hands — because, alleged the Tories, they 'beat up the Factories for aid'. Fighting broke out around a banner depicting one of Marshall's child-workers. When the noise subsided, Hall demanded a poll. Eleven wounded partisans were taken to the Infirmary.⁶⁵

After all the excitement, the poll was soon over. On 12 December Sadler was 400 votes behind, and Macaulay, sitting 'in the midst of 200 friends, all mad with exultation and party spirit', prepared his victory message — 'he would lay it on Sadler pretty heavily', he told his sister. At the close, Marshall had 2011 votes, Macaulay 1983 and Sadler 1587. In speeches at the post-election dinners, Sadler again spoke for wider enfranchisement, while the victors toasted Liberty and Reform; and Macaulay praised Leeds voters for rejecting 'all the Corruption and Intimidation which disgraced the Elections of

Newark . . . Slander and Hypocrisy, Threats and Caresses, Bludgeons and Gin'. There was no unctuous exchange of congratulatory messages; indeed, the charges continued. Baines later accused Sadler of threatening murder — a fantasy for which the *Mercury* had to apologise. Disappointed Tories claimed that hired ruffians had intimidated their supporters. One important fact was that leading Left-wing Radicals had for ever deserted Whiggism. But this was only a small consolation to the factory reformers.⁶⁶

On 20 December Oastler attended the West Riding nomination at Wakefield. Though resigning the impossible candidature, he insisted on speaking. Young Baines shouted, 'send him to the madhouse', to which Oastlerites retorted, 'send thee to the gallows, thou thief!' Oastler was shouted down, but Bull stayed to question Morpeth and Strickland, both of whom expressed interest in factory reform but refused any specific pledge. That evening Oastler addressed a crowded audience in the Mechanics' Institute, advocating property and machinery taxation, domestic manufactures and an Irish Poor Law. He denied Liberal slanders that he was paid £500 by Lord Harewood to distract attention from slavery:

he hated slavery in any shape . . . [but] no system in the world [was] so horrible, so degrading, so devilish as the Factory System . . . [and] he was ashamed of England when he thought of her profession of religion and her cruelty.

Oastler appealed for a variety of reforms, including 'cheap law' and a working-class suffrage, defended trade unions and denounced the 'most unjust and hypocritical' Reform Act. He was a Protectionist —

Whenever I hear a British artisan shout 'cheap foreign corn', I always fancy I see his wife pulling his coat and hear her crying out 'Low wages'. . . . My principle of legislation is this — to encourage home growth, home labour, home trade and home consumption.

This first statement of the reformers' social creeds ended near midnight with a personal statement: ⁶⁷

As a Tory, I have always conceived that my principles should tend to support order and happiness in every state. . . . 'The Altar, The Throne and The Cottage' is my standing toast. This I

always understood to be Toryism. If I am right, then I am a Tory; you may call me a rebel, if you please.

The Factory Movement was already developing its own comprehensive philosophy.

But the reformers had been seriously defeated. They had lost Sadler. At Halifax, Stuart-Wortley lost to two determined Liberals, Rawdon Briggs and Charles Wood. Fenton easily defeated Wood at Huddersfield, amid Radical riots. Hindley narrowly lost at Ashton; the Tory Grimsditch failed at Macclesfield, Banks at Bradford, Cobbett at Manchester and Hunt at Preston. Northern voters, as Oastler had feared, generally supported Liberal manufacturers and Whig aristocrats. Several reformers were successful: Duncombe defeated Ramsden in the North Riding, Cobbett and Fielden won Oldham and the Radical Joseph Brotherton, a Bible Christian pastor, vegetarian, teetotaller and former factory boy, was elected at Salford.⁶⁸ But against them was ranged a phalanx of opponents — Marshall, Cunliffe-Lister, Briggs, Wood, Mark Philips and Poulett Thomson at Manchester and Richard Potter in Wigan. Nationally, the Tories were shattered, with only about 150 Members in the new Parliament.

The Factory Movement now faced a difficult struggle. Oastler regarded it as the only hope of reform against the Liberals, whose respectable façade he tried to denigrate:

very many of Wilberforce's enemies of 1807 are on the Anti-Slavery Committees, canting and prating about their veneration for [him]. . . .

He would 'rather have a toad or snake in his bosom' than a Whig. But,

For a season, treachery and malice and hypocrisy have triumphed. The voters of Leeds have listened to the voice of the tempter.

Oastler endeavoured to explain the Radicals to the Tories, whom he urged to 'go forward, hand in hand with the people', for ⁶⁹

The People have now learnt their strength, the avalanche is descending and will crush its opponents. It is not too late to guide it — it *is* too late to oppose.

Twelve years before Disraeli's *Sybil*, Oastler was appealing to 'Young England' to help the second nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFEAT

EARLY one winter's morning, a young sportsman trudged through heavy snow near Bingley to shoot wildfowl. He was William Busfeld, the 23-year-old heir to two squirearchical families. 'On my road', he recalled thirty years later,¹

. . . I found a little factory slave half-buried in a snowdrift, fast asleep. I dragged it from its winding sheet; the icy hand of death had congealed its blood and paralysed its limbs. . . . I aroused it from its stupor and saved its life. From that day I became a 'Ten Hours Bill man' and the unflinching advocate of 'Protection to Native Industry'.

This dramatic conversion brought a future leader to the Movement.

The agitation had need of such support early in 1833, when the outlook appeared gloomy; but it retained its virility. Bradford reformers formed a series of new committees, starting at Stanningley on Boxing Day of 1832. When Lieutenant-Colonel George Williams, M.P. for Ashton, asked masters to suggest remedies for 'the admitted grievances of the intense labours of the workman, and especially of the *young and helpless*', George Downes' local committee acted quickly, 'sending a deputation to give the Colonal [*sic*] every information in their power'; Downes and two others 'where appointed to wate upon him' [*sic*].² Now that their 'indomitable champion was excluded from Parliament', wrote Hannam and Taylor of Leeds, workers must oppose all 'Jesuitical' plans for an 11-hour compromise.³

The publication of Sadler's *Report* in January 1833 caused a sensation; even the younger Baines thought the evidence 'horrible and an outrage on humanity and decency'. But the *Morning Chronicle* thought that 'the most barbarous of the Yorkshiremen were outdone in barbarity by the Scots'. The

Dundee Advertiser was convinced that 'the present factory system was at variance with humanity and sound policy' and urgently needed reform; but it was sorry to 'oppose some of [its] best friends and offend them grievously' on the question. The *Aberdeen Journal* read the evidence with such 'horror and loathing' that 'no inducement' could persuade it to publish extracts.⁴

But despite all efforts, it seemed that the agitation had achieved no more than Luddism or strikes. Many wages were falling: while well-organised Bolton spinners might earn as much as 30s. for 67½ hours' labour, and Manchester fine spinners averaged 20-25s., Manchester power weavers earned 10s. 10d., throstle-spinners 7s. 7d. and child piecers 5s. 10d. At Styal Samuel Greg paid spinners 6s. 6d. and still employed 'apprentices'. The handloom weavers were in the midst of their agonising decline: Todmorden wages averaged 4s. 3d. per head.⁵ Sheer desperation led such workers into every agitation.

Opponents used varied arguments. Marshall baldly stated that 10-hours' legislation was 'not to the benefit of the labouring classes'. Unrepresentative Parliaments, high taxation or agricultural Protection were all regularly blamed for industrial conditions. The Corn Laws, maintained one pamphleteer, were 'the greatest bonus that could be given to the foreign manufacturer'.⁶ Some asserted that legislation could safely follow the end of Protection, some that it would then be unnecessary; others opposed it absolutely. Cotton masters resented restrictions on themselves, advocating more general and less stringent legislation.⁷ Vernon Royle of Manchester answered attacks on the masters: the entrepreneur was 'the greatest benefactor the poor man could have'. He denied all allegations on ill-health, and condemned reformers as sophists, quacks and cheats. In any case, restriction of children was impossible:

The old and young are essentially necessary to each other and form a whole and make a full and beneficial division of labour. . . .

Above all, Royle could ⁸

hardly believe that men could be found so visionary as to believe that an Act of Parliament could regulate the hours of labour [and] could create food and a demand for labour.

To Finlay, the Ten Hours Bill was 'one of the visionary and impracticable schemes of the philanthropic enthusiast Mr. Robert Owen'. He claimed that Scottish workers were perfectly healthy and that Lancashire's evasions of existing Acts proved the futility of legislation.⁹ Another Scottish master condemned Sadler's Bill as 'suicidal madness', and a Montrose manufacturer denounced the '*ex parte* evidence' and 'exaggerated accounts'; 'the impolicy of interfering between master and servant' was 'obvious and undeniable'. The 'tyrannical and unconstitutional' measure was really 'a Bill for depriving the Proprietors . . . of a fifth part of their property'; Corn Laws, monopolies and competition made child labour 'a dire, invincible necessity'.¹⁰

Worsted employers also remained hostile. 'The silk, worsted and woollen mills are the most healthy, and the flax, tow and cotton the most unhealthy', one master insisted.¹¹ Birley pointed out that,¹²

Every situation of life has, more or less, its abuses — and workers in cotton factories are not exempt. Isolated cases, some true, some coloured, some entirely false, some of old date, are no proof of general suffering.

Opponents thus mixed economic assertion with humanitarian profession; the Bill would 'annihilate the Manufactures of Great Britain' and 'impoverish the poor and cover the land with wretchedness'.¹³ Each group defended itself, small masters against the large, the great masters against reactionary politicians and revolutionary demagogues. At the best, reformers were well-intentioned dupes, at the worst, menacing incendiaries. All opponents agreed in condemning restrictions on adult labour. Parliament might as well try to abolish work itself, they said.

But professions of poverty and prophecies of doom made little impression on reformers. Noting that long hours were ascribed to high taxation and bad institutions, Sadler dryly commented that the owners were nevertheless wealthy; and similar conditions prevailed in the moderately taxed United States. The real cause, he insisted, was 'the tyranny and domination of the capitalists, spurred on by the lust of gain . . .'.¹⁴ The Marshalls had bought Cumbrian and

Belgian properties, and Cunliffe-Lister lived in state as the squire of Manningham. Three Manchester firms now employed over 1400 workers; Birley had 1692, Ormrod of Bolton 1576, Ashton of Hyde 1149 and McConnell 1553. In twelve years 46 woollen mills were built in Yorkshire; Bradford's worsted mills rose from 5 to 34 in twenty-three years; the number of power looms had leapt from 2400 to 100,000 since 1813. In face of such wealth and development, as ever greater mansions arose around each industrial town, the efforts of Mechanics' Institutes and Useful Knowledge Societies, fostered by Baines, Marshall, Finlay, Marsland and their allies, and the priggish homilies of Harriet Martineau failed to convert many workmen to 'Political Economy'.¹⁵

But the Movement's first task was to find Sadler's successor in the new, unsympathetic Parliament. 'Sadler is a loss', Southey told Lord Ashley,¹⁶

he might not be popular in the House or in London Society, but his speeches did much good in the country, and he is a singularly able, right-minded, religious man. Who is there that will take up the question of our white slave trade with equal feelings?

I

On 11 January 1833 twenty Short Time Committee delegates, including six 'visitors', conferred at Bradford, under William Halliwell, a Lees cotton master, and Turner; Bull was the secretary. Glasgow, Dundee, Manchester, Chorlton, Bury, Bolton, Oldham, Lees, Ashton, Preston, Wigan, Chorley, Huddersfield, Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, Dewsbury, Gomersal, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth, Horton, Bowling, Stanningley and Nottingham reformers were either represented or sent statements of their views; Leeds, significantly, was aloof. Sadler and Osburn visited the conference, but the decisions were taken by the operative delegates. It was decided to organise a subscribing membership, send six delegates to London and form new village committees. Oastler was to be 'the centre of communication', and Bull was sent to London, to select a new Parliamentary leader. After three days' deliberations, the delegates held a large meeting in the Bowling Primitive Methodist chapel, under Bull; the 'official' Method-

ists refused accommodation. After speeches by Boddington, Richardson, Halliwell and Turner, Doherty denied charges of 'Tory trickery' and Oastler thundered against dissenting, Methodist and Quaker opponents:

Wesley would not have been silent on this question, I know he would not, nor would he have refused his chapels . . . no matter who had rented the front seats in the gallery.

Oastler ferociously attacked Baines — 'the deadliest enemy of all' — and warned against Morpeth's compromise plan. The factory children, he said, were

the most abandoned, most neglected, most persecuted, but the most industrious beings in the world, and their plunderers were loud professing Christians all the while.

The conference finally issued an *Address to the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry, Master Manufacturers, Agriculturalists, Tradesmen and Operatives of the United Kingdom*.¹⁷

Rapid campaigning followed. On 16 January Bull and Richardson formed a Pudsey committee, supported by the vicar, David Jenkins. Hall and Rawlinson of Bradford established committees at Yeadon, Guiseley and Baildon. At Otley, 'the *preserve* of William Ackroyd', their noisy meeting failed, but after a long debate with two masters, they formed an Eccleshill group on 28 January. Next day, Hall and Bull were aided by the vicar, E. M. Hall, in founding an Idle committee. On 30 January the Bradford men established a committee in the Church school-room at Shipley, and on the following evenings formed Thornton and Clayton branches; Calverley and Farsley soon followed. Meanwhile, Oastler, Pitkeithley and the Crabtrees addressed almost 2000 people in the Dewsbury Sunday school on 30 January, supported by the vicar, John Buckworth. The Bolton committee solicited support from local manufacturers, clergy and gentry; and Leeds mill delegates met in the Angel Inn to condemn any compromise.¹⁸

Oastler still hoped to gain Wellington's support, believing that 'if the country [were to] be saved, it would be through the instrumentality of his Grace'. He explained that his object was to 'unite the Aristocracy and the People, and thus to save them both'. Oastler 'converted' John Baldwin, a Halifax worsted master; and when G. W. Addison of Bradford

attacked Habergam's evidence, Oastler, Osburn and Brook replied in detail. Replies to attacks on the Sadler Report actually gave the reformers extra publicity.¹⁹

Meanwhile, armed with letters from Sadler, Bull visited London. His quest was urgent: Parliament would meet on 29 January and a compromise Bill was widely expected. After approaching several Members, he met Sir Andrew Agnew, 7th baronet of Lochnaw Castle, an eccentric Scottish Sabbatarian, who advised him to visit Lord Ashley, the 31-year-old Tory Member for Dorset. Bull met Ashley on 2 February, and, after a night of prayer and consultation, the young Evangelical nobleman accepted the post, thus beginning his long philanthropic career.²⁰

When the Session opened on 5 February, Ashley gave notice that he would reintroduce Sadler's Bill. Next day Bull excitedly wrote to the committees that Ashley was well supported and 'received many unexpected assurances of support'. Ashley himself was 'noble, benevolent and resolute in mind, as he was manly in person', reported Bull:²¹

I have just left his Lordship and find him more determined than ever. He says it is your cause; if you support him, he will never flinch.

By detailed procedures determined at Bradford, six delegates were elected to help Ashley in London. The earnest new leader, son and heir of the 6th Earl of Shaftesbury, was already interested in Christian social work, but was ignorant of the industrial North, although, 'astonished and disgusted' by the 1832 evidence, he had offered his help to Sadler. Now Oastler welcomed him as his ideal, a Christian Tory aristocrat. All credit, Ashley modestly replied, belonged to Oastler and Sadler, who had 'borne the real toil, encountered the real opposition [and] roused the sluggish public'. He minimised his own ability, but had 'such strong opinions on the matter that he did not *dare*, as a Christian' refuse his help.²² From Keswick, Southey delightedly told him,²³

Thousands of thousands will bless you for taking up the cause of these poor children. I do not believe that anything more inhuman than the system has ever disgraced human nature, in any age or country. . . .

No one could forecast the Government's reactions. Robert Kenworthy of Delph hoped that Lord Brougham might aid social reform. But the new Commons, whose 'asperity, rudeness, vulgar assumption of independence [and] fawning reference to the people' disgusted Peel,²⁴ contained many opponents. Although Ashley's plan was known, Morpeth announced a rival scheme; *The Times* condemned his discourtesy in dating his 'niggardly measure' for 27 February, six days before Ashley's proposal was due, but thought that the public would support Ashley. In two public letters Oastler furiously berated 'the sleek and oily Morpeth', who 'would betray the infants' sacred cause, like Judas, with a kiss', by lengthening adults' work and using the children in relays.²⁵ Morpeth told Ashley that he had not intended to be 'discourteous or unfair', but wanted a Bill which 'would best suit the interests of all classes'. Ashley replied that he opposed any compromise and would insist on the 10 hours' day, with 8 hours on Saturday and no night-work: he 'would spare neither time nor trouble in this or any other Session to establish these principles'.²⁶ Though resenting Oastler's abuse, Morpeth postponed his motion and finally withdrew it on 6 March.

II

A great Northern campaign was mounted in Ashley's support. Henry Heap, the vicar of Bradford, presided at a meeting addressed by Oastler, Bull and three clergymen on 19 February, after which over 7000 signatures were obtained for petitions. Clerical support was now widespread and gave the Movement a corps of experienced speakers. Boddington spoke to 2000 Keighley people, with Wildman and Weatherhead.²⁷ At Manchester on 14 February Oastler was joined by Father Daniel Hearne, a pugnacious Roman Catholic Temperance advocate, along with Anglican clergy and Condry; and a Wigan rally was supported by ministers of many denominations, from Presbyterian to Roman Catholic. Each meeting prepared petitions, and 73 reached Parliament within two months; Leeds sent 16,000 names, Bradford 12,000 and even Norwich 9000.²⁸

There was also a Scottish campaign. Blairgowrie operatives prepared a petition in February, and 3000 Dundonians rallied

on 6 March, under their Provost, to petition Lords and Commons. The new Glasgow women's power-loom weavers' association gave support, and local reformers published a poem on 'The Factory Children' by George McCallum, a boy worker. But opposition remained strong in Scotland. On 1 March the Glasgow cotton masters, under Finlay, roundly condemned the Bill and sent a deputation, led by two Members, Colonel Leith-Hay and James Oswald, to Althorp. All the cruelties, claimed a local paper, 'invariably occurred in silk, flax or woollen manufactories', and the Common Law already protected children from violence. Bull alleged, however, that Finlay's associates were victimising operative supporters of the Radical *Liberator*, which 'pleaded most forcibly the cause of the British "Free" Labourer'.²⁹

On 23 February the London Society organised an important meeting in the City of London Tavern, under the Lord Mayor, Sir Peter Laurie. The platform included the 14th Lord Teynham, Colonel Torrens, O'Connell, Owen, Duncombe, Agnew, Sir Edward Knatchbull, Sir William Blizard and other politicians, clergy and aldermen. Bull spoke of the children's hardships, and O'Connell, whose adherence ensured substantial Roman Catholic support, answered Liberal criticism. Williams of Ashton supported the Bill and Duncombe opposed any compromise — 'to no Bill with a moment more than 10 hours would he ever agree'. Oastler described industrial cruelties and Ashley promised never to 'give way a single moment on the question of 10 hours'. Finally, Sadler advocated social Christianity to defeat the philosophy of 'letting things alone'.³⁰ The Society, which now included Dr. Hodgkin, Laurie, Dr. E. M. Hughes and Benjamin Jowett of Leeds, organised further petitions.

In Parliament, sympathetic Members expressed their horror at Sadler's Report. Williams believed that 'no question whatever required such immediate consideration', and Hobhouse considered that 'two opinions could not be entertained', after reading the evidence. 'Nothing can overturn the case which has already been proved', claimed Strickland, '— not only by the words but also by the appearance of the unfortunate and, in many cases, crippled sufferers.' But on 5 March a new problem was raised, when Wilson Patten, the Conservative

Member for North Lancashire, adopted the masters' demand for further enquiry. Even Morpeth opposed him, and Patten postponed his proposal on 13 and 14 March. The committees believed that Patten's Commission would be used to 'white-wash' the masters. And Oastler protested that Baines, who prophesied that Sadler's Bill would be 'laughed out of the House', now wanted a Commission, which

would inevitably cost the country (not the mill-owners) several thousands of pounds and delay the settlement of the question many years. . . .

Furthermore, such an investigation, 'whose avowed object was to legalize, by some pretence or other, the work of infanticide', would only see specially prepared mills.³¹

Reformers everywhere were mobilised to intensify their agitation. Attwood, O'Connell, Robinson, Ashley, Strickland and Wynford condemned Patten's proposal at Westminster. 'Many poor families', alleged Bull, 'had stinted themselves of both food and clothes to support [Sadler's] enquiry', and would now be thwarted by Patten, 'the pet of the Lancashire Cotton Lords'. The *Morning Herald* saw the scheme as 'Tyranny's Last Shift'. 'The poor, the Oppressed, have to *pay* for their redress', wrote Leeds reformers,

and, when done, could not get it. The Rich, the Oppressors, are contriving schemes of delay — there is to be a Commission of so many nice sleek Gentlemen, with good salaries from Government, *to delay justice*, to continue infanticide, AND THE POOR ARE TO PAY FOR THAT TOO!

Also protesting against 'the Parliamentary Commission to delay the Ten Hours Bill', the Bradford men recalled that the 1832 Committee was set up by the masters' wishes. Further enquiry was completely unnecessary, declared the Otley reformers.³² The usual poetic appeals were issued, including *The Yorkshire Factory Children's Letter to Mr. Wilson Patten*:

We've worked *long* hours too *long* at' mill
We're killed, while others fatten;
So don't delay our Ten Hours Bill,
Cold-hearted Wilson Patten!

On 11 March Rand, Bull, Boddington and Oastler spoke at Horton, and rallies followed at Dundee, Leeds, Glasgow, Otley,

Birstall, Gomersal and Warrington — where ‘there was stout opposition and a glorious victory’. Oastler made a Lancashire tour, addressing large audiences at Chorlton, Bolton, Chorley, Preston and Manchester, on five successive evenings from 19 March. He was increasingly militant, as he condemned hypocritical chapel-attending millowners, who denied the workers time for religious observance, family life or education. In the Preston Cockpit, supported by Turner and Livesey, he talked of the dangers of a society where property was owned by the few and produced by the many :

The present system had caused a chasm in society, and the conduct of those masters who openly violated the law had robbed the law of its sanctity. . . . Though hope might refuse to glance across that awful chasm, despair, maddened by hatred and revenge, would dare the leap. . . .

High Toryism was developing unsuspected philosophies ; here were the doctrines of Christian Socialism, the theory of the ‘Two Nations’, the benevolence of squirearchic ‘feudalism’ transferred to the world of industry. And in each speech, Oastler quoted well-known local examples of overworking and told Lancashire of conditions under completely unrestricted Yorkshire masters.³³

The campaign was maintained in a variety of ways. Aided by John Armstrong, the vicar of Wallsend, Bull even spoke in Newcastle. Bradford reformers petitioned the King and Wildman sent Keighley petitions to Wellington.³⁴ But the opposition case was also strongly propounded by masters’ committees in each textile town. An anonymous Manchester manufacturer stressed the need for careful consideration : as three-quarters of production was exported, the vital question was whether Britain could compete with American firms, who had lower taxation, cheaper cotton and longer hours. George Higginbottom of the Lancashire Central Committee answered the ‘anonymous scribbler’ by pointing out that investigation had already proved that the system caused ill-health and prevented religious or domestic education.³⁵ This Manchester argument demonstrated the contrast between economic and ‘social’ arguments used by the two sides.

Controversy continued in the Press. Bull’s *Protector*, in its

last weeks before closing on 19 April, pointed out that Patten wanted the Commission to 'do justice to the manufacturers', and ascribed the scheme to Thomson, Philips and George William Wood, the Lancashire Liberal leaders. Late in March it exposed a 'silly, yet execrable . . . [and] trashy production', a new 'compromise' Bill.³⁶ *The Times*, *Morning Herald*, *Standard*, *Examiner*, *Guardian* and new evening *True Sun* supported reform, and the *Halifax Guardian* 'most heartily concurred'. Livesey's Temperance paper, *The Moral Reformer*, praised Sadler and condemned the 'system of slavery' in factories.³⁷ But the *British Magazine* opposed legislation, and Perronet Thompson's *Westminster Review* insisted that the Bill was a 'stalking-horse to cover and protect' the Corn Laws and slavery, and that the Government should only act when these 'two nuisances had been abated'.³⁸ Other magazines, however, supported the Bill. *Fraser's Magazine* advocated legislation 'which would give work to all, but excessive labour to none'; it declared that 'a more revolting, demoralising, wicked or cruel system never existed'. *Blackwood's Magazine* asserted that

the contagion of vice spreads from the factories. They are, many of them, nurseries of prostitution.

The committees reprinted many such articles; and even a humorous magazine abhorred 'the factory ferocities' and Patten's 'disgraceful resolution'.³⁹ In a once-famous book, the surgeon Peter Gaskell, though generally 'liberal' and doubting stories of factory cruelties, lamented evil social conditions and stressed the need for some reform.⁴⁰ 'What are governments for', Reuben Bullock of Macclesfield pertinently asked, 'but to make laws that the weak may be protected against the power of the strong?'⁴¹

Support sometimes came from surprising quarters. 'I hope your Factory Bill will prosper', the economist J. R. McCulloch told Ashley:

. . . I would not interfere between adults and masters; but it is absurd to contend that children have the power to judge for themselves as to such a matter. I look upon the facts disclosed in the late Report as most disgraceful to the nation. . . .

Robert Torrens believed interference was imperative, 'to save the infant labourer from the cruel oppression of oppressive

toil', but was convinced that the Corn Laws were 'the root of the disease'. Even Poulett Scrope, the brother of Poulett Thomson, thought reform 'highly desirable'.⁴² But the economists' support was not to be long-lived.

Oastler remained constantly active, answering each opponent. Manchester conditions horrified him; Royle's stunted, ragged employees were 'more fitting to be at their mothers' breasts than to be the labourers of a great and wealthy commercial country'. When Thomas Gisborne, a dissenting Dukinfield coalowner and M.P., attacked Sadler's 'one-sided' Report, Oastler challenged him to deny the medical and clerical evidence, and again condemned wealthy Christians whose employees spent Sunday at work.⁴³ On 27 March Oastler again visited Bolton, to receive a silver cup from the borough-reeve, in recognition of his services.⁴⁴ The ever-sanguine Owen, planning huge new schemes, told James Morrison, the Birmingham builders' leader, that ⁴⁵

we must never allow the working men to despair again. They are beginning to know their power and strength, and all that is required is to give it a right direction.

As usual, Owen's estimate of the situation was sadly wrong.

III

Ashley's Bill was introduced on 5 March.⁴⁶ And on 3 April the Commons debated Patten's motion. Robinson lamented the 'terrible price' of industrial supremacy and Lennard spoke of the 'frightful outlay of human lives'. Dr. Lushington 'could not consent to the continuance of such horrid sufferings'. Attwood and Morpeth opposed further investigation. Ashley claimed that mills were specially prepared for inspectors, and 'the children were desired to appear in their best clothes and the deformed or sickly removed'. Fielden supported this view from personal experience :

It is a notorious fact that labour is carried on for 13, 14 or 15 hours a day in defiance of the law. I think 10 hours would be profitable enough, both for the employers and the employed. . . .

The support of 'honest John' Fielden was to be of great importance. But Patten and Spring Rice — Marshall's future

brother-in-law — strongly favoured the Commission, Patten claiming that Sadler's evidence came only from paid supporters (an odd reference to the payment of operatives' expenses). In a sparsely attended House, the motion was carried by 74 votes to 73.⁴⁷ Sixteen days later, the Commission was issued.

IV

The patience of the bitterly disappointed Northern committees was now almost exhausted, and a heightened militancy entered the campaign. Early in April it was decided to hold a series of meetings to discuss policy, before a further general conference. The campaign began at Halifax on 8 April, when Oastler denounced local masters and ministers: 'he would rather be under the control of a she-wolf than under such Christians'. Bull and Condry supported him, and the meeting petitioned the King, as 'the common father of his people', against the Commission and for immediate legislation. During the same evening, 2000 Bingley people heard young Busfield's first speech, and petitioned Lords and Commons. Through Easter Week, meetings followed each night. On 9 April Bull and Wood addressed 3000 Bradfordians, under the vicar, while Sadler spoke at Leeds. Fervent rallies assembled at Glasgow, Preston, Bolton, Wigan, Keighley, Oldham, Manchester and Dewsbury.⁴⁸ Richardson told Leeds delegates that ⁴⁹

Burke, with his small retail shop in Edinboro', was only a petty dealer and chapman in comparison with those who carried on child murder on an extensive scale and in large establishments.

'Child Murder no Crime!', proclaimed Huddersfield placards, condemning the Commission appointed to decide 'whether Children are to be *Starved or Worked to DEATH!*'

On 22 April delegates assembled at Manchester under Higginbottom, for the Movement's second conference, and decided to boycott and harass the Commissioners. Bull was sent to rouse Western workers and Downes to organise the Midlands. Brotherton's suggested 'Eleven Hours' compromise was rejected as likely to cause 'disorder amongst us',⁵⁰ and Oastler was confirmed as national organiser. Two days later,

the delegates addressed Manchester supporters in the Court House. Bull called for further clerical support :

God abhorred robbery for burnt offering, and the rich would do better to give the hireling his due wages than to adorn subscription lists. . . . He lived amidst factories and said to the Legislature, 'Either declare my office useless and abolish it at once, or else give me at least the Ten Hours Bill'.

'Thou'll never be a bishop !' commented a caustic listener, as Bull spoke of wealth's responsibilities. 'Then, amidst almost hysterical cheers, Oastler thundered against 'the base liar' Patten and others, hinting at a terrible revenge :

If they would drive him to use the word, let them — at their own bidding and not at his — let them dread the dagger and the torch,

for he would no longer reason with hypocrites 'as bloody and tyrannical as Nero'. Next day Oastler sent the conference's Address to the Queen. Eleven 'private and confidential' instructions were sent to local committees, and an *Address of the Operatives of England and Scotland to all ranks and classes of the Land* was published, denying that agricultural Protection affected industrial conditions and condemning the Commission.⁵¹

V

Letters Patent for the Commission were issued on 19 April. The London Central Commission consisted of Thomas Tooke, Edwin Chadwick and Dr. Thomas Southwood Smith. James Stuart, Robert Mackintosh and Sir David Barry, M.D., were Commissioners for the North, John Elliot Drinkwater, Alfred Power and Charles Loudon for the North-East, John Welsford Cowell, Edward Carleton Tufnell and Dr. Francis Bissett Hawkins for Lancashire, and Leonard Horner, Stephen Woolriche and John Spencer for the West ; John Wilson was the secretary. Disinterested men, cool, analytical and unsentimental, they were model social scientists, strongly approved of by J. S. Mill. As disciples of the great Bentham, believing in the hedonistic calculus and the doctrines of Utility, they were unmoved by appeals to moral or ethical standards. Interference with 'free agents' they strongly opposed ; but children might

be protected.⁵² The 44 pages of their detailed *Instructions* included questions on the 'positive and relative moral and physical condition of the children employed in Factories', the nature, suitability and hours of work and on punishments. The medical Commissioners were to examine workers' health and ask women about miscarriages and the paternity of their children. Reformers were infuriated by such questions, and *The Times* declared that it had rarely seen 'such a mass of insolent and stupid verbiage'; it concluded that,⁵³

The central board ought to be ashamed of itself; but boards are insensible to all such laudable emotions.

Widespread abuse greeted the 'swell mob'; Oastler called for demonstrations wherever the officials appeared. 'Nice Pickings! Commissioning is no bad job . . . for Idle Lads', declared Bradford posters, commenting on the Commissioners' £200 salaries and £5 : 5s. daily expenses. 'Have you all made your wills?' taunted one pamphleteer. Placards complained of the 'disgusting, unfeeling impudence' of 'briefless Southern lawyers' pronouncing on industrial conditions.⁵⁴ 'Your Commission is a farce', declared the *Morning Herald*, '— a farce after a tragedy, and intended, like the farce, to obliterate the impression of the tragedy.' After bitter arguments with Manchester millowners, Condry answered Royle's pamphlet, condemning the displacement of adults and demanding interference 'for the prevention of contracts which are detrimental to the public welfare'. In *Fraser's Magazine* he attacked 'the Commission for perpetuating Factory Infanticide', run by Utilitarians, who⁵⁵

had no idea of a people save and except as tax-producing and money-gathering animals of the unplumed biped species, [and were] appointed because of their supposed indifference to the questions of infant suffering and their great capacity for political calculation, without any liability to any misgivings on the score of human kindness.

Geoffrey Crabtree, a retired attorney, told Althorp that the Commission was illegal, and condemned the 'sleek men, with purses well filled and portly paunches', who had created it.⁵⁶

The committees' arrangements for receiving the Commissioners worked smoothly. Leeds was warned on 27 April

of 'the Approach of the Enemy', at Leicester. On 4 May 5000 Manchester reformers marched from Peterloo field to tell the investigators of their 'unconquerable aversion and suspicion'; and local children presented their own appeal:

Let not a respect for wealth disguise from your view our severe wrongs, nor restrain you from declaring what measure of Justice is due to us . . . our bodies are wasted and our strength sinking under our daily tasks and we are without any time for amusement or learning. . . .

Each committee presented 'respectful remonstrances' and then refused co-operation. Everywhere, the children sang Condry's new song to the Commissioners: ⁵⁷

. . . Parliament say what they will,
We will have the Ten Hours Bill.

In Scotland, however, reformers appear to have aided the enquiry. The mills were being cleaned earlier than usual, alleged the *Dundee Advertiser*, and

it is therefore of the greatest importance that all the friends of children and young persons employed should come forward and give the Commissioners all the information they can. . . .

It reported general satisfaction with the Commissioners' private examinations of 9-14 May,

although all concerned, and the Commissioners among the rest, were aware that the field of evidence in Dundee had not been one third exhausted.

After travelling North, the Northern Commissioners reached Glasgow late in May.⁵⁸

Stronger tactics met Drinkwater and Power in Leeds on 13 May. The committee presented its protest that evening and Sadler condemned the 'secret tribunal', calling for open examinations and the recording of evidence. When the Commissioners attacked Sadler's 'highly excited imagination', Rider retorted that

they were earning their daily bread by a work so dirty that an honest operative, however humble, would scorn to undertake.

A series of bitter letters passed. Sadler continued to protest at the 'really monstrous' methods of private interrogation and

selection of evidence, and condemned the rumoured 'horrible compromise'. In reply, Drinkwater complained of personal attacks, 'expressed with more or less coarseness' and of abusive posters 'in almost every street'; and Power also defended himself.⁵⁹ But Leeds reformers claimed that the Commissioners' accounts of their meetings with Sadler were 'direct falsehoods', giving 'a most erroneous view . . . [and] a false colouring to every transaction recorded'.⁶⁰ However, the Leeds committee was divided, and a minority collaborated. But on 16 May Richardson and Foster led 3000 children to protest that the enquiry was 'founded in injustice, inhumanity and fraud' and aimed 'not to obtain correct information, but to clear our guilty tyrants'. Richardson maintained that the Commissioners

were virtually engaged in a work of treason and blood . . . to sanction and legalise murder was their object.

After considerable repartee at the Commissioners' hotel, Oastler asserted that the enquiry was 'a trick of the Government' to save 'their dear friends, the Capitalists'. When Baines misreported the affair, the committee challenged him to debate, calling the Commissioners 'consummate hypocrites . . . engaged in the work of Murder'. And when agents observing the investigators reported that they had dined with Marshall and even listed the menu, another protest rally was held, on 20 May. Four days later Oastler delivered his most violent tirade, condemning the Commission for 21 reasons, 'in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'. Drinkwater denounced his 'language of blasphemy or sedition', but Oastler was unrepentant. 'Think not to alarm me', he replied:

You are receiving wages from my Labour, and I shall express my opinion of your appointment in such terms as to me may seem good.

He urged firmness against 'the secret inquisition to perpetuate child murder'.⁶¹

Doherty and Turner, the London delegates, refused any co-operation, and at Bradford Bull attacked the Commission's furtive proceedings. Posters mocked 'the 15 fine South-Country

Lawyers and Doctors' wherever they travelled, and the Huddersfield committee burned their effigies with an horrific glee which impressed Dr. Thomas Chalmers, the Scottish divine — 'the figures were fearfully like men'.⁶² The Commissioners tried to evade such attentions. Stating that they were moving to Huddersfield, they left Leeds under the observation of a horseman, when, said Oastler, later, 'lo and behold! they were found polluting Bradford with their presence'. Bradford was well prepared. "'Get Away, Get Away'", said King Richard', proclaimed the posters, and memorials were instantly presented. Bull compared the Commission to the Spanish Inquisition and claimed that

the oppression of the Rich — of those especially who hypocritically assumed a Christian profession — had done more to injure Christianity than all that Voltaire or Paine ever produced.

He organised demonstrations on 6 and 11 June, and children drove the investigators from one factory. Again Drinkwater laid false trails, buying coach tickets for Keighley, where the committee was alerted, but travelling South. On entering his Doncaster inn, he was greeted by a committee agent, who presented the county's last, surprising protest.⁶³

The mammoth protest campaign discredited Liberal allegations that the workmen opposed factory legislation. Suspicious — with reason — of the Benthamite philosophy of some officials, the reformers believed that non-co-operation would hinder any Government scheme. Ashley privately warned Althorp of the high tempers in the North: 'the people were desperate'. As usual, Oastler was the principal voice of such militancy. Workers and Peers alike, he told Wellington, were menaced

by a set of the most contemptible, low bred, tyrannical wretches who ever lived: the 'Liberal' Capitalists and Factory Lords.

He urged the artistocracy to lead against 'the liberal steam-and-money interest'; if reform were not soon achieved, 'the sooner the better we have a regular blow up'. Oastler sent details of a new 'pendulum loom' to Wellington and local unions, hoping that it might save the handloom weavers.⁶⁴

The Reform agitations gave a precedent for the view that enormous demonstrations could influence Parliament and

Government. 'If ever the "Ten Hours Factory Bill" passes', wrote a Huddersfield Radical,⁶⁵

. . . it will be by the People adopting the same means as ensured the passing of the Reform Bill, by an extensive combination of the physical and moral power of the PEOPLE.

The Bradford Political Union announced its support, and at Manchester Condry combined factory reform with a wider Radical programme.⁶⁶ The campaign reached a climax at Huddersfield on 18 June, when Oastler revealed the sympathy of the Queen, Primate and Duchess of Kent. He denounced the Commissioners, who had been unable to visit many mills or meet workers, but had 'found time to guzzle wine and to eat and drink to the full at the table of Mr. Marshall'. Oastler complained that Habergam had been unfairly interrogated, and condemned the 'disgusting, filthy, immoral, inhuman and horrible' conditions in Addison's mill, which the Commissioners had exonerated. Petitions were now prepared 'against the Report of the Commissioners being received'.⁶⁷ Ashley protested, on 3 June, that the Government had not published the investigators' names until after the enquiry had begun. On the following day, in the First Chamber of the Estates of Darmstadt, Baron von Gagern spoke with horror of the English factory system.⁶⁸ On 17 June Ashley's Bill, providing for the imprisonment of third offenders, reached its Second Reading. Althorp reserved his comments, but hinted that he favoured only the restriction of the youngest children. Ashley himself opposed the controversial punishment clause; Grant later wrote that it was 'introduced at the earnest solicitation of our more zealous than judicious friends in Yorkshire'.⁶⁹

The 'Ten Hours' leaders knew that new proposals were probably being planned. Even Baines and the masters' London delegates now suggested prohibiting the employment of children under 10 or 11 and limiting those under 12 to 6 hours. The delegates — Hoole and R. H. Greg of Manchester, Samuel Robinson of Ashton, James Kenworthy of Dukinfield, Jonathan Hague and James Wright of Oldham, William Walker of Bury, John Foster and John Haughton of Blackburn, Abraham Brierley and James Schofield of Rochdale, William Taylor and J. Caton of Preston, Andrew Mulholland of Belfast and Houldsworth

of Glasgow — had great influence.⁷⁰ Oastler now feared that Government intended to restrict the youngest children and use them in relays, but believed that there were not enough children available.⁷¹ On 19 June Bull wrote that Althorp, their 'deadly Enemy at every turn', planned an Eight Hours Bill for children under 14, and quoted Hardy's warnings to the Bradford committee that such a measure would increase the work of older children. He opposed any proposal worse than Ashley's.⁷² On the same day, Huddersfield, Leeds and Bradford delegates resolved to hold another Riding rally, to expose the 'insidious scheme' and give 'a last lift for the Ten Hours Bill'. When the *Mercury* commended a relay plan, John Stubbs and William Rider, the Leeds chairman and secretary, warned operatives that it would increase adults' labour. Huddersfield posters cautioned reformers that 'Tyranny would die hard'. But propaganda still extended: a Bradford theatre produced a play on 'The Factory Child, or the Ten Hours Bill', during that week.⁷³

As relays involved a general 16 hours' day for adults, said reformers, it was vital to retain Ashley's 10 hours restriction for children under 18 and prohibition of nightwork under 21. On 24 June Yorkshire delegates met at the Yew Tree Tavern, Roberttown, under Charles Etherington and Rider, to consider future strategy. The Bill was in a new position, they pointed out; as Sadler had prophesied, the Government was trying to 'outbid' reformers. But they insisted, with many masters, that relays were impossible. The contest 'could not now be a battle for hours, but would be a battle for the limitation of ages' and on the sanctions supporting any Act. The delegates urged operatives to stand firm by Ashley's Bill and to attend a rally on Wibsey Moor on 1 July.⁷⁴ Next day Hall issued instructions for the meeting, banning political flags and favours; and the committees prepared for another march. 'Freinds of Humanitty', [*sic*] called the Huddersfield men,

be at your Post . . . to give the grand and final blow to the Factory Tyrants and the last lift to the TEN HOUR BILL.

Bradford reformers asked millowners to stop their mills, as they had done at the time of Reform meetings.⁷⁵ And so, fearing a variety of possible Government measures, the Northern committees awaited the Commissioners' recommendations.

VI

The reformers had underestimated the Commissioners' capabilities. The first hastily prepared *Report*, published on 25 June, was a comprehensive and well-argued document. 'We were not favoured with any assistance from any of the supporters of [Ashley's] Bill', the Commissioners complained :

The most active, if not the best instructed, supporters of this measure have manifested a spirit of hostility to the progress of the present inquiry, to which we believe that few parallel instances are upon record on a subject of grave national importance. . . .

Nevertheless, they had collected considerable information, from which they argued the expected conclusion :

1st. That the children employed in all the principal branches of manufacture throughout the Kingdom work during the same number of hours as the adults.

2nd. That the effects of labour during such hours are, in a great number of cases,

Permanent deterioration of the physical condition ;

The production of disease often wholly irremediable ; and

The partial or entire exclusion (by reason of excessive fatigue) from the means of obtaining adequate education and acquiring useful habits, or of profiting from those means when afforded.

3rd. That at the age when children suffer these injuries from the labour they undergo, they are not free agents, but are let out to hire, the wages they earn being received and appropriated by their parents and guardians.

We are therefore of opinion that a case is made out for the interference of the Legislature in behalf of the children employed in factories.

Chadwick and his fellows rejected Ashley's Bill, as it provided neither 'adequate protection' nor education. Furthermore, its ⁷⁶

most direct and undisputed consequence . . . would be the general limitation of the labour of adults within the same hours as those assigned to children and adolescents . . . [this] assumption was prominently put forward in the arguments of most of the leading advocates of the measure, and was generally dwelt upon as forming a principal item amongst the benefits which they expected to derive from [it]. . . .

The Commission repudiated the Sadler Committee's evidence on factory cruelties, while noting punishments in smaller mills. But children were found to be working from the age of 8 or 9, and sometimes as early as 5. The evil of the system lay in its effects on health rather than in discipline or conditions. But the Commissioners observed that

The greater the carelessness of the proprietors in neglecting sufficiently to fence the machinery, and the greater the number of accidents, the less their sympathy with the sufferers.

As existing legislation was 'almost entirely inoperative', the officials were interested in enforcement. Long hours, especially in overtime working, illness and corporal punishments were noted; thus, the reformers were, to some extent, surprisingly vindicated.

The Commissioners steered a middle course between unmitigated *laissez-faire* and comprehensive protection. Restriction of adults was anathema, and the Ten Hours Bill — ascribed to union agitators, hypocritically hiding behind a façade of concern for the children — was rejected. Instead, employment should be prohibited for children under 9 and limited to 8 hours, with no nightwork, for those under 13. 'Free agency' thus began at 13, largely because further interference appeared administratively impossible; and even this limitation would take effect in stages. Masters' protests were rejected and relays were advocated. Above all, the Commission called for the provision of educational facilities and the establishment of an inspectorate.⁷⁷

Some of the medical Reports contained more dramatic observations. Dr. Hawkins advocated a ten hours' day for children under 18, and

felt the less distrust in his own opinion because it was sanctioned by a large majority of eminent medical men practising in this district. . . .

Loudon considered that children had worked 'most unreasonable and cruel' hours and that even adults were expected to perform labour 'which scarcely any human was able to endure'. He supported 8 hours for children under 14; but

no individual should, under any circumstance, work more than 12 hours a day — although, if practicable, as a physician, he would

prefer the limitation of 10 hours for all persons who earned their bread by their industry.

The most important document, however, was not the work of the district Commissioners, but, as the London *Courier* pointed out, the *Report* of Chadwick and the Central Board; indeed, the medical evidence was not published with the main recommendations.⁷⁸

The factory reformers instantly assailed the *Report*. To the new Radical *Leeds Times* it was

one of the most stupid, blundering, contradictory, malignant and dangerous compositions ever presented to the abhorrence of the British Empire.

The *Morning Herald* had

no language . . . [to] convey its disgust at the recommendations of these Factory Gentlemen, and its astonishment that they had had the temerity to propound them to a Christian community. . . .

The *Report* was 'a precious farrago of nonsense', declared the *Morning Post*, and

at once the most ridiculous and inhuman production that ever emanated from men professing to be actuated by any feeling of benevolence.

The *Times* found it 'the most preposterous production that was ever offered to human contemplation' and rebuked the *Globe*, which welcomed the volume :

in order to decide whether infants ought to be killed or crippled by premature and oppressive work, it was not necessary that 12 gentlemen should be sent on a voyage of inquiry and produce, as a result of their researches, a large blue book 14 inches by 9 and weighing about 9 lb.

The Radical *True Sun* thought the *Report*

disgraceful to all parties concerned in drawing it up . . . a foul and unnatural burden [which] ought to be publicly burnt in Palace yard.

The *Courier* recommended a pamphlet by a nurse at Guy's Hospital, which, in two pages, clearly proved 'that a child is a child, and incapable of bearing the fatigue and toil which an adult can bear' — while 'the other bulky volume left the

question just where it found it'. The *Guardian and Public Ledger* condemned the Commissioners' 'assurance, bombast, ignorance . . . insolence and malignity [and] sneaking and detected sycophancy towards wealth and power'. To the *Standard*,

all that was remarkable in this huge ton of letterpress was supplied by the prominent and disgusting heads of inquiry suggested to the Commissioners, or the petulant folly of these ingenious youths' reports. . . .

In the far North, Kidd and Gordon called a protest meeting in Aberdeen and formed a committee of operatives.⁷⁹

Mingled with traditionalists' suspicion of new Governmental methods of securing information, there was a growing apprehension among reformers that their boycott might have been mistaken. But on first hearing of the plan, Oastler was still hopeful, telling Foster that

The Eight Hours and two sets plan has completely settled the point — we shall get our Bill if our deputation do their duty — I have no doubt of it. The object was to outbid us in the market of Humanity and to trade upon that feeling in the public mind, and then in Com^{ee} show that two sets could not be procured and then leave off at 14 years for the 'Free agents' to do as they like. . . . The operatives are now more determined and more united than ever — they are mad indeed. . . . I never saw anything like the Hudd[ersfield] meeting; in Bradford they are red hot, and even in Leeds united and firm — nay, even enthusiastic. We have gained much in Leeds by the recent defalcations — we now know our men. . . .

If the new proposal were carried, he forecast 'a bloody revolution'.⁸⁰ In this mood of mingled consternation, anger and hope, the Yorkshire reformers held their second massive rally.

VII

On Monday 1 July a vast assembly of about 100,000 gathered on Wibsey Low Moor, after marching through summer rainstorms from all the Riding textile areas. First came the Leeds division, with Pudsey, Stanningley, Farsley and Calverley contingents. 'Oastler's Own' Huddersfield division followed, incorporating Holmfirth, Honley, Deighton and Brighouse

groups. From the Bradford area came the Baildon, Guiseley, Idle, Yeadon, Eccleshill and Otley committees. The men of Birstall, Batley, Gomersal, Birkenshaw, Heckmondwike and Mirfield joined the Dewsbury division; and divisions from Halifax and Keighley completed the force. Together, they formed one of the largest meetings in nineteenth-century England. Captain Wood was chairman, supported by most of the Movement's leaders. Young Busfeild, leader of the Bingley contingent of the Keighley division, roared his curses upon the 'system which sanctioned child murder':

if they flinched an inch, they were lost. 'The Ten Hours Bill and no concession for ever' — with that they should stand or fall. . . .

Joseph Bedford of Keighley, a former child worker, Ayrey, Condy, Bull, Stocks, Pitkeithley and Richardson all spoke. Ashley's representative, Doherty, urged that the punishment clause should be dropped; but Oastler and the crowd refused. Oastler himself rose to threatening heights:

It was a question of blood against gold. Infants' blood had been sold for naught, but if they were despised now, it would be a question of blood in another sense. . . .

After 5½ hours' speeches, petitions were sent to Strickland and the Primate against the new plan. The Central Committee issued its own Press release on the affair, and Perring, who attended, warned the Government that it would be 'unwise' to ignore the appeal, as it 'would most assuredly sow a whirlwind':⁸¹

The meeting on Monday embraced a mighty physical power which may easily be called into adverse exercise. . . .

But Parliament took no notice of such threats. On 5 July Althorp roundly condemned Ashley's Bill and called for inspection and education. He proposed to send the Bill to a Select Committee, to be modified to meet the Government's policy. Ashley insisted that relays were impracticable. O'Connell protested that time-wasting committees were 'trifling with human existence', and his henchman, Lalor Sheil, condemned 'the abominable system which combined the baseness of Mammon with the ferocity of Moloch'. Brotherton, who 'could never forget his former station nor feel otherwise

than much disposed to stand by his order', movingly described his childhood in a factory. To Cobbett, 'the question . . . [was] Mammon or Mercy?' and Inglis found it

disheartening and disgusting to think that, on a calculation of profit and loss, they should consider whether infants ought to be worn to death.

Althorp's proposal was rejected by 164 votes to 141.⁸²

The Northern committees were tense with expectancy. The Leeds Trades' Union, run by a mysterious 'John Powlett', supported the cause, while organising its own campaign against Morpeth's permissive Truck Bill. Foster's *Patriot* and Bull's *Protector* had ceased publication on 16 February and 19 April, but new journalistic supporters included Joshua Hobson's 'unstamped' *Voice of the West Riding*, the *Leeds Times* and Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*.⁸³ Halifax workers met on 13 July, to protest against the Commissioners' 'libels'.⁸⁴ But in general, the Movement was content to await Parliament's decision. It was now at the peak of its strength; and anxious Manchester masters, fearing Ashley's success, threatened to 'withhold co-operation'.

On 18 July the Commons again discussed Ashley's Bill. Althorp and Ashley repeated their arguments, and Strickland, Duncombe and other reformers insisted that the *Report* confirmed their previous allegations. But on the division Ashley was resoundingly defeated by 238 votes to 93. 'We have this night made one of the greatest discoveries ever made by a House of Commons', declared Cobbett, bitterly:

— that all our greatness and prosperity, that our superiority over other nations is owing to 30,000 little girls in Lancashire. . . .

After this total defeat, Ashley 'refused to bear the responsibility of an altered Bill'; he believed that 'the Government propositions would produce ten-fold misery and ten-fold crime'.⁸⁵ The Ten Hours Bill was lost.

CHAPTER FIVE

NEW CAUSES

As reformers awaited the news from Westminster, several bitter arguments began in the North. An operative, George Crabtree, told Oastler of the cruelties, victimisation and Truck systems of the Calder Dale mills, noted while organising 'Ten Hours' meetings at Ripponden, Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge, Heptonstall, Todmorden, Mytholmroyd, Ovenden and Southowram. Several clergy had supported him, but he witnessed 'more misery and wretchedness . . . than he . . . thought existed in the whole British Empire'.¹ In July angry masters answered Crabtree's 'misrepresentations and lies' and attacked Oastler, the Rev. Thomas Crowther and 'the Parson System' and Oastler's 'Corn Law rents and Corn Law salary'. Oastler soon accepted the challenge of the anonymous 'Tyrants and Cowards' to prove his allegations, if witnesses' employment were guaranteed. The employers then attacked Oastler's Protectionism and blamed him for the high Halifax tithes.² This odd perversion of Oastler's anti-tithe campaign of 1827 was answered by Joseph Woodhall, the Bradford committee chairman. He also opposed Protection ³ —

But is it proved that the labourer would be assured of greater plenty, if no Corn Laws existed? No! If Corn were cheaper, wages would be lower.

Another storm arose on the 'Left' of the Movement. The bankrupt Foster claimed support from the Movement, which the Central Committees refused, though Oastler raised £141 in his support. Disappointed and bitter, Foster took to threatening Oastler and then started a Press campaign against him. In late July Foster's first announcement appeared in the *Mercury*, and by September he was alleging in the delighted Whig Press that the Movement's accounts had been dishonestly managed.⁴ The subsequent unpleasant controversy was to

strain the Tory-Radical alliance to the utmost. But even the Commissioners argued. Stuart, a Scottish investigator, complained to Wilson that there were 'material omissions' in the published evidence. When Wilson claimed that lengthy evidence had of necessity to be cut, Stuart asserted that important facts had been omitted; the Central Commissioners had paid too much deference to the 'bit of a parliament' of millowners' delegates. Wilson promised to publish Stuart's evidence later, but Stuart pointed out that Parliament was about to legislate. Stuart believed relays to be impossible and that the only way to enforce legislation was to stop the engines; but the Central Board had,

in their general report, the only document likely to be read, omitted *all reference* to the evidence unfavourable to their recommendation. . . .

The disgruntled Commissioner published the correspondence, claiming that the 'recommendation . . . was not only unsupported by, but was in direct opposition to, the valuable part of the written evidence'. He told Wilson that⁵

The Report . . . is the report of three gentlemen residing in London, who, for aught that appears in the Report, never visited a cotton factory, nor a flax factory, in their lives.

The retiring John Wood himself argued with Power, in *The Times*.⁶ Inevitably, Oastler was in the midst of controversy, now with Richard Potter, who had attacked him. But the 'Factory King' was no longer confident. He gloomily complained to Wildman of the 'compromisers', and considered the possibility of gaining 'Ten Hours' by strikes; petitioning was obviously useless. But⁷

The operatives must fight their own battles, or crouch for ever at the feet of the mill tyrants. . . . My fear alone arises from the spirit of concession, which Satan has put into the hearts of your leaders. We are all right at Huddersfield, Holmfirth, Manchester, &c., &c., Leeds is divided, I believe, as indeed it always is.

The passing of the Second Reading of the Bill abolishing slavery, on 26 July, provoked further comments from reformers. The London Society assailed the 'pretended humanity which persecuted the child before 13 and entirely deserted it after-

wards'.⁸ When the Anti-Slavery Society published a best-selling account of Jamaican conditions by Oastler's Methodist friend Henry Whiteley, demonstrating that negro slavery was far worse than 'White Slavery', London reformers still maintained that Northern conditions were more brutal.⁹ Oastler still titled his epistles 'Slavery in Yorkshire'; and Bradford supporters commented sarcastically on local Emancipationist lectures, noting that the anti-slavers opposed factory reform and that the Quakers had given £1000 for Emancipation and £3 to the Factory Movement.¹⁰ The pious Society of Friends actually included some of the Movement's most bitter opponents.

The factory campaign continued through a last, hopeless phase. Fourteen Bradford doctors memorialised Parliament. 'An Old Friend' at Leeds who mourned that 'The Ten Hours Bill was LOST' and wildly advocated the abolition of factories, was answered by Woodhall and Hall, who declared that it was only delayed and organised a Bradford rally. On 25 July a meeting assembled under the vicar of Bradford to petition the Lords against Althorp's 'cruel deception' and to hear Bull demand 'equal laws' and condemn the new proposal and the Commission's comments on the Poor Law: ¹¹

There is a conspiracy against the poor labourer of England. The ancient institution of poor laws (which certainly requires amendment), the national charity, is to be abolished or nullified, instead of amended. . . .

Scottish workers also protested. Five ministers and many operatives attended Gordon's Aberdeen meeting to petition the Lords. The militant Glasgow workers, meeting on 1 August, condemned the 'cunning and cruel policy of the contemptible and sordid narrow-minded political economists', and talked of striking against what one Abraham Duncan called 'the atrocious, tiger-hearted Whig Ministry'.¹² On the same day, West Riding delegates met in Leeds to hear Oastler urge workers

to join themselves together from one end of England to the other in a resolute determination not to work more than 10 hours of a day.

If Government existed solely to defend wealth, Oastler 'declared himself a traitor to it'.¹³ But as the North talked of industrial action, the Government Bill was being prepared.

I

Althorp's Bill was introduced on 9 August. Prepared by Chadwick, it largely followed the Commissioners' recommendations. An 8 hours limitation was to apply to children under 11 within 6 months, to those under 12 in 18 months and those under 13 in 30 months. A new scheme was to restrict young persons under 18 to 12 hours. Important clauses provided for inspection by permanent officials and for schools to be provided by the masters, who were to recover costs by wage deductions. Children under 9 were prohibited from employment. During subsequent debates, Heathcote's amendment to exclude the lace trade was accepted, while Brotherton's Ten Hours amendment and Thomas Attwood's opposition to the education clauses were rejected. Despite Sir Henry Willoughby's claim that relays were 'ineffectual and impracticable', the Bill passed rapidly and, after the Lords had negatived the clause allowing inspectors to control the opening of factory schools, received the Royal Assent on 29 August.¹⁴ It applied to cotton, woollen, worsted, hemp, flax, tow and linen mills and, explained Leonard Horner, a few months later, had 'three great objects': to prevent the overworking of juveniles, to provide for education, and 'to accomplish these ends without interfering with . . . adults'.¹⁵

Apparently 'outbidden in humanity', reformers were rendered powerless. Believing that Labour was 'the most defenceless . . . property, and that which needed most protection',¹⁶ they had advocated comprehensive legislation. But Althorp's Act made their hopes impossible and made them appear less 'benevolent' than the Whigs and economists. The shock of defeat left a residue of bitterness. While Oastler blamed the 'compromising spirit', Sadler regretted the eventual weakening of the punishment clauses, which Bull regarded as 'a most essential part' of the Bill. On the other hand, Ashley told Manchester reformers that the decision to abandon the provisions for imprisonment was his:

The late defeat has proved the feebleness of our partisans, even upon principles. What, then, would have been the result upon *details*?

The disappointed committees ascribed the Act to the great millowners; Oastler believed that it 'was supported by [them] because they knew it to be impracticable'.¹⁷

But the committees could do little; 'Working Class solidarity' was, as ever, a chimera, and most reformers resorted to abuse and gloomy prognostications. 'The inspectorships are a lumbering affair', commented the *Intelligencer*, with Tory suspicion of 'the patronage they afforded'. The *Mercury* itself could only justify the 'minute vexatious interference' on the grounds of necessity. Bull saw the inspectors as 'factory inquisitors'. Preston reformers invited local clergy to a meeting on 22 August, and Halifax also held a protest rally; but such ventures achieved nothing.¹⁸ Nevertheless, as Southey consoled Ashley, something had been gained: ¹⁹

The manufacturers and the Ministers would have done nothing unless you had forced them to it. . . .

Meanwhile, Oastler settled the Calder Dale controversy. The masters refused to meet 'that great Mountebank', but Bull, Glendinning, Brook, Hanson, James Hargreaves and Oastler addressed 5000 people at Hebden Bridge on 24 August. Bull condemned the Act's 'confusion . . . bare-faced hypocrisy and manifest violation of civil and religious liberty'. Oastler lashed the local masters and praised the courageous Crowther. And Hargreaves asked,²⁰

What have we had since the Whigs passed the Reform Bill? We have had nothing but cruelty and hypocrisy, and this is a sample of the Liberty-loving Whigs.

With this declaration of an increasingly popular belief by a Yorkshire operative, two years' agitation came to a close.

II

Defeated and dispirited, the Movement suffered from increasing strains in the autumn. Hobson was prosecuted for illegal publication in August and imprisoned at Wakefield, where Cobbett ensured his comfort, but ²¹

begged him to bear in mind that he *violated the law*, and advised him most strongly not to do it again. As long [as it] existed, they must obey it.

The unwitting London Radicals welcomed Althorp's Act and adopted Foster's malevolent charges to discredit the Northern Tories. The *Morning Chronicle* gladly published Foster's rambling letters, alleging that Oastler had embezzled some £4500 of £7000 donations. In vain, Oastler explained that all cash was paid directly to Beckett's bank at Leeds and that the Central Committee (including Foster) controlled expenditure; Oastler himself had charge only of his own and Wood's gifts. Hetherington adopted Foster's allegations:

We have long been accustomed to hear the changes rung on Oastler and Sadler, and Sadler and Oastler, *ad nauseam* . . . [but] we are forced to believe them very selfish fellows. They have had the patronage of the Factory Exchequer . . . whilst the man who really did the business . . . namely, Foster of the *Leeds Patriot*, has been betrayed, despised, misrepresented and all but destroyed. . . .

This nonsense seemed to mark the end of the Tory-Radical alliance.²²

In the summer Baines had predicted 'a great struggle' between the woollen masters and unions, and Hobson published an ill-written, militant *Address to the Members of the Trades Union*, the anonymous author explaining that ²³

the money that should have educated him had gone to help to build fine Palaces and great Factories and to help to make great fortunes for children that was brought up in idleness and luxury. . . .

As union activity mounted in the autumn, many reformers joined the struggle. And when Joseph Radcliffe, a Leeds overseer, was committed for the manslaughter of a factory boy in September, large crowds demonstrated against him.

There was a danger that the painfully constructed Movement might now disintegrate. But on 28 October Yorkshire delegates met in the Yew Tree Inn at Birstall under James Bedford, and planned a new 'Factory Reformation Society'. They hoped particularly to enrol magistrates, doctors and manufacturers, in support of a Ten Hours Bill for all under 21 and the protection of all workers. Their *Address* pointed out that Althorp's Act 'had been entirely under the care and direction of a few great Mill owners'; and, significantly, they declared that

the evils of Lord Althorp's Act are not chargeable upon us. Already we are charged with the blame of those manifold annoyances and impracticabilities which are found in it.

They urged Ashley to revive his Bill in the next Session, or to accept Kenyon's offer to introduce it in the Lords.²⁴ The reformers had not yet adapted their policy to the new circumstances: their proposal involved increasing the youngest children's hours. But Oastler arranged the sale of the manifesto, as shortage of funds precluded free distribution, and 'Reformation Societies' were formed at Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield. Reformers were again active. Wildman successfully defended two girls charged at Keighley with leaving work early.²⁵ Grant answered Hetherington's attack on Oastler, which the conference and the Huddersfield committee also repudiated. When Hetherington travelled North in December, the operatives 'converted' him, and in the following month he met Oastler and became a firm friend. An all-party Leeds meeting under Hey, the Mayor, unanimously condemned Foster's final ridiculous libels on Sadler, and the bitter controversy closed.²⁶ In November Wood instituted a 10 hours' day at Bradford, without reducing wages, in an unsuccessful attempt to lead other employers. But soon afterwards another Radical upsurge led to the Movement's collapse.

III

Simultaneously with the Factory Movement, other proletarian organisations had rapidly expanded, notably Doherty's 'National Association' in Lancashire and the Midlands and Simeon Pollard's 'Yorkshire Trades Union'. Owenite bodies also advanced, organising regular conferences from 1831. Personal and ideological links connected the assorted groups. Doherty supported Co-operation and Radicalism; McGowan, his former lieutenant, led the Glasgow cotton spinners and factory reformers. Pitkeithley, Hobson and Hanson were Owenite socialists; William Thompson's *Age of Harmony* was dedicated to Pitkeithley.²⁷ Whitehead and Stocks both spoke at Owen's fifth Co-operative Congress in Easter Week of 1833 at Huddersfield, the strongest socialist centre in Yorkshire. Owen's 'great mission to change the condition of the Industrious

Classes over the Kingdom and over the World' led to numerous organisations. In October 1833 he planned a 'Grand Moral Union of the Productive Classes', and toured Yorkshire and Lancashire to gain support, meeting many factory reformers among Northern operatives struggling against masters' reprisals.²⁸

At Todmorden Owen and Fielden planned a new factory reform movement, the 'Society for Promoting National Regeneration', which Owen announced at a Manchester conference on 25 November, promising the support of 150,000 trade unionists. Other speakers included Cleave and Hetherington. One Joshua Milne was elected chairman, and the committee included such old reformers as Condry, Doherty, Turner, Grant, Higginbottom, William Clegg and John, Joshua and Thomas Fielden. The Society wanted

'for eight hours work the present full day's wages', such 8 hours to be performed between the hours of 6 in the morning and 6 in the evening. . . .

The scheme was to start on 1 March. The Regenerationists explained that

8 hours' daily labour is enough for any human being, and under proper arrangements sufficient to afford an ample supply of food, raiment and shelter . . . and to the remainder of his time every person is entitled for education, recreation and sleep.

Strike action was planned to enforce the 8 hours' day.

Oastler was invited to join the new group, but maintained the constitutional proprieties of the Movement, explaining that

if we were to turn aside from the resolutions of the delegates' and committee meetings, we should deservedly lose the confidence of the operatives.

But he 'would never argue against an 8 hours' Bill'. Hetherington took care to withdraw his past attacks, and the Society resolved²⁹

That Messrs. Oastler, Wood, Bull, Sadler and others be urgently requested to desist from soliciting Parliament for a ten hours Bill and to use their utmost exertions in aid of the measure now adopted . . . and that the thanks of this meeting are hereby given . . . for their long continued invaluable services. . . .

But though sympathetic, Oastler considered the scheme impossible, as did the Quaker manufacturer David Holt. William Fitton, a Royton surgeon, told Fielden that it presupposed a change in human nature. Fielden replied at length and, while admitting Owen's 'very peculiar opinions', won Cobbett's support for the doctrine that 'adults in factories must by unions amongst themselves make a Short-Time Bill for themselves'. 'Missionaries' toured the industrial areas to 'induce' operatives and 'request' masters to agree. While dark news arrived of extending lockouts, the Lancashire committees were converted into 'Regeneration' branches. Oldham reformers joined on Christmas Day, and next day Fielden attended a Huddersfield dinner, to start the campaign in Yorkshire.³⁰

Owen's Regenerationists failed, like his other ventures; but his intervention killed Oastler's Reformation Society and the remnants of the Movement.

IV

Althorp's Act was widely disliked. Section XX, providing for 12 hours' education weekly, was particularly distrusted.³¹ Inspection was also suspected by both sides. Charles Wood frankly admitted to Halifax Liberals that

whether the Bill was good or not . . . it was the only course Government had in its power to pursue, to avoid a much greater evil . . . [for] at the beginning of the Session, a large majority of the House, he believed, would have carried what was called the Ten Hours Bill . . . [only] the exertions of the representatives of the newly enfranchised towns . . . [carried Althorp's] Bill.

Wood sneeringly contrasted the 45 hours' work of negro adults with the 60 hours allowed to children 'even by the extravagant Humanity of Mr. Oastler'. Bradford reformers quickly pointed out that Oastler had advocated 58 (not 60) hours, and did not oppose the new 48 hours' week.³² Many masters opposed the Act. Samuel and William Greg, for instance, insisted that cotton workers'

health and morals . . . were at least equal to those of those engaged in other occupations . . . [and] that the long hours of labour did *not* over-fatigue the children, or injure their health and constitutions. . . .

Charges of cruelty were 'entirely groundless', education was 'carefully attended to', Lancashire poor rates were the lowest in Britain and wages were comparatively high; 'the inapplicability of the Factory Bill to such a state of things must be evident to all . . .'.³³ On the other hand, an oddly assorted group prepared *The Agricultural and Industrial Magazine* as the organ of a 'Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry' and social reform. Supporters included Lords Tyrconnel and Combermere, Fielden, Sir Charles Burrell, Matthias Attwood, Sir Hyde Parker, Hesketh Fleetwood, John Maxwell, Stocks and Oastler. To Wellington, Oastler justified the 'Moral Unions' and contrasted the average 6s. 11d. wage of Marshall's 1229 employees with their employer's £2,000,000 fortune. He advised the aristocracy: ³⁴

Your danger does not arise from the people — your only safety is with them; it is the golden lever of the capitalist which creates your danger. Come, then, to the help of the people, and no longer be afraid of their hearty cheers!

During November, Parliamentary seats for Leeds and Huddersfield fell vacant, on Macaulay's resignation and Fenton's death. Captain Wood, recently converted to Roman Catholicism, advised Pitkeithley and Stocks to nominate Sadler or Oastler at Huddersfield. Against Oastler's advice, Sadler accepted; but early in December Roman Catholic Radicals again nominated Wood, who again refused, advising all Radicals to 'unite for the public good'. On 9 December Sadler entered the town, supported by Radicals, Tories and reformers. But next day the Roman Catholics announced another campaign for Wood, and the old alliance was split; on 16 December 1200 operatives even asked Oastler to stand. The confusing division extended to the *Voice of the West Riding*, whose editor was dismissed by a 'Woodite' group for supporting Sadler. On 30 December, after three disclaimers, Wood accepted the candidature and, to Oastler's extreme anger, the defeat of 'the best friend of the working man' was certain. Sadler fought on, supported by Oastler, John Whitacre and an operatives' committee; while Oastler condemned the 'Whig tool', Wood, Sadler attacked the Reform Act which had 'bamboozled' the people. But on 8 January Huddersfield returned Ramsden's nominee, the lawyer John Blackburne, with 234 votes to Sadler's

147 and Wood's 108.³⁵ Subsequent recriminations divided Huddersfield reformers for many months.

At Leeds the Liberals finally selected Baines, on 13 December. The Tories favoured Sadler, but after the Huddersfield election he was too weak to accept, and on 22 January they turned to Sir John Beckett, the popular local banker. An experienced politician, Beckett had been an under-secretary in the Whig Ministry of 1806, at the age of 31. Later becoming a Tory, he sat for Cockermouth and Haslemere and served as Judge Marshall in Wellington's Ministry. In 1832 he had been defeated at Retford. Now the 'Ten Hours' men supported him against their old enemy. Bull roused the Factory Reformation Society, and Oastler assailed the exploiting Marshall and 'lying' Baines. Robert Hall, a Tory barrister and reformer, who employed the crippled Habergam and paid for the education of several injured children, was Beckett's chairman; and his friends again produced their *Cracker*. Rider recalled the 'deception' of Reform and that Baines 'had been the willing tool of their oppressors and their most inveterate but crafty foe'. But, as at Huddersfield, there was a danger of a Tory-Radical split, when the 'liberal Radical' Joshua Bower was nominated. On the hustings, he and Beckett were cheered for approving of trade unions, and Baines was hissed for disagreeing. Leeds Toryism was reviving, and the result was excitingly close. After the poll on 15 February, Baines, with 1951 votes, was 35 ahead of Beckett; Bower had 24 votes. Baines had only saved the seat by the support of 40 Pudsey millowners — 'the 40 thieves' to local Tories.³⁶

Further blows followed the electoral defeats. By February 1834 the Regenerationists had 30 Northern branches. Doherty founded the Society's organ, *The Herald of the Rights of Industry*, on 8 February, to

advocate a revolution co-extensive with society itself, which would affect, more or less, every individual in these kingdoms.

He roused his old Midlands supporters with the naturally popular principle of '8 hours' labour for 12 hours' wages', forming branches at Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Loughborough, Chesterfield and Mansfield.³⁷ In February the Leeds Reformation Society became a 'Regeneration' branch and asked

the local committee to follow. After a preliminary meeting of organisers, a Bradford meeting was held on 10 March, under Bull, to hear Grant, Clegg and Thomas Fielden. Oastler and Bull, however, refused to join, predicting an early collapse of the impracticable plan. Three days later, the new *Bradford Observer*, founded by Liberal masters and dissenting ministers, attacked Bull for attending the meeting. He replied vigorously against the Ackroyds and other masters; and when the *Observer* declared him 'raving mad', he professed indifference to its 'Billingsgate abuse': 'he knew that he was not popular among the rich people of Bradford'. But Bull firmly rejected 'Regeneration' and rebuked the operatives for their fitfulness:

You are a rope of sand; you are jealous of each other. There are too many of you that would not give up one hour's occupation, one hour's comfort, or the price of one glass of ale, to save *your own class* from distress and ruin. . . . Now, therefore, do exercise a little forbearance and keep your little political playthings still and quiet, when great practical questions are under discussion.

The *Observer* rejected this commentary, but Peter Bussey, an ultra-Radical publican and the local 'Regenerationist' chairman, sent it to the *Leeds Times*:³⁸

It contained truth not very creditable to the operatives, yet they confessed it was true and only wished it were not so.

Suspensions of Owenite weakness were justified. For a time, the Society expanded, holding a Manchester conference in March and forming a Sheffield branch in April. But Leicester and Derby lockouts had ignited national struggles, which were inherited by Owen's Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in February; and the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' were sentenced to transportation on 19 March, for administering illegal oaths.³⁹ The 'Regenerationists' memorialised the King and postponed their strikes, though Oldham spinners rioted briefly but violently in April, for the 8 hours' day. Unionism gradually weakened in the spring. When, on 7 June, Morrison's *Pioneer* dramatically announced 'Derby has Fallen', the end was near. Blaming 'the fatal, universal indolence . . . the frightful, disastrous apathy' for 'all our misfortunes', Manchester spinners hastily reorganised, to escape the general

collapse. But Pollard's Leeds Union fought desperately. 'It used to be "live and let live",' complained John Stansfield, at a rally on 1 June, 'but now it is "live that can live".' Three weeks later, Hetherington recorded the 'Breaking up of the Leeds Trades Union'; Baines had supported the masters, in Parliament and the *Mercury*.⁴⁰ Internal dissensions, bad administration, lockouts, victimisation and near-starvation crushed Owen's ill-planned empire. Unabashed, he regretted the opposition, announced that 'employers and employed had precisely the same interest' and turned to new schemes.⁴¹ His disastrous interference had destroyed both the Unions and the Factory Movement.

V

Meanwhile, Oastler was occupied with post-election arguments. When the Liberal Huddersfield postmaster, William Moore, republished Foster's libels, Oastler accused Moore of obscenity, immorality and opening the mails. He also attacked Wood, as Ramsden's tool. Wood replied with sarcastic abuse of the Church of England, whereupon Oastler produced a mock Papal Bull, detailing 'bloody, immoral [and] disgusting' Romanist rites.⁴² When Wood issued another Radical-cum-Romanist attack on the Church, Oastler published two vitriolic assaults, contriving to attack Wood's 'indecent' religion and 'the hateful Bill of hateful Althorp' at the same time. Oastler could never forgive Wood's 'betrayal' of Sadler and reviewed the recent activities of the 'self-convicted liar . . . arrogant, unblushing coxcomb . . . [and] lying Papist' in detail.⁴³ An ardent Church reformer himself, he was determined that Papism should not benefit from Radical attacks.

When local Whigs challenged him to attend their dinner, Oastler's prompt acceptance was met by a withdrawal of the invitation; the affair made a pleasant joke in April.⁴⁴ But Oastler was more interested in the widespread Tolpuddle protests, and still warned Wellington of the dangers of neglecting social reform. On 4 April Oastler addressed the assembled Whigs, while a mob clamoured outside.⁴⁵ Bradford operatives rallied on the same day, and Leeds, Huddersfield and Manchester followed; and delegates at Birstall on 26 April planned

a county meeting on Wibsey Moor for 5 May. The Tolpuddle men, explained Rider, were condemned under

an old rusty Act . . . which would transport two of the Royal Dukes and half of the aristocracy of the land if it was impartially put in force.

He complained that Baines had not been transported for attacking the Crown.⁴⁶ The Unions were not 'the great cause of our national distress', wrote Oastler, but 'the legitimate offspring of that distress'. He urged unionists to drop their secrecy and masters to help them; and in June he reprimanded Leeds masters who were smashing unionism by lockouts, victimisation and refusal of poor relief, asking 'whether the Laws of the Land or the uncontrolled Will of the "United" Masters was to govern the Operatives'. He recalled Liberal protests when Newcastle exercised his 'right' to control his tenants' votes :

ye have taught the People what Tyrants the Aristocrats were, but it has been reserved for the 'March of Intellect' to teach a 'Liberal' Millowner or Manufacturer or Cloth Dresser how to out-Herod Herod in Tyranny and Cruelty !

The masters would beat the men, but 'they will owe you a grudge — and they will pay it you, some day !' Oastler advised both sides to join arbitration boards.⁴⁷ On May Day Bull wrote his protest, which was published by the Yorkshire Union. He assailed the use of forgotten legislation to convict humble labourers of offences committed by ducal freemasons; if the men were not freed, the people should unite to throw out ⁴⁸

all the Tax Refusing, King Killing, Queen Insulting, King Dethroning, Queen Groaning, Rebellion Exciting, Industry Oppressing, Liberty Loving, Innocence Transporting, Lying, Greedy, Wily, Cowardly WHIGS.

But all the appeals were in vain; the six men were transported to Australia.

'The Factory Question is overlaid at present by the Unions', Southey told Ashley, in May : ⁴⁹

but when the excitement which their menacing attitude has caused throughout the manufacturing districts subsides, the cry against that evil will again be heard.

But new topics now impinged on the controversy, which were radically to affect the Movement's history.

VI

While Northern craftsmen declined before the onward march of industrialism, the independent, robust peasantry of exaggerated British boasts sank to the level of a landless proletariat, which the 'Speenhamland system' of doles only worsened. In 1830, as Oastler's factory crusade began, 'Captain Swing' organised arson and machine-wrecking in the Southern counties. But this 'last peasants' revolt' ended tragically, with 9 executions, some 400 prison sentences and 457 transportations.⁵⁰ From February 1832 a Royal Commission examined the failure of the expensive Poor Law to remedy distress. The Commissioners and their Benthamite assistants, Chadwick, Wilson and Cameron, were influenced by Malthusian arguments against the system, as recently developed by Senior. In February 1834 their Report condemned 'outdoor relief' and the workhouses' comparative comfort, advocating central control and the abolition of relief except in workhouses applying the principle of 'less eligibility'.⁵¹ Liberal spokesmen hastened to concur. Tudor legislators, Brougham pointed out,

were not adepts in political science — they were not acquainted with the true principles of population, [and] could not foresee that a Malthus would arise to enlighten mankind.

The Government hastily prepared legislation, supported by all parties; 'it was our support . . . that enabled Government to pass it without fearful resistance', Peel told Croker, in 1838.⁵² Introducing the Bill, Althorp acknowledged that any Poor Law was

contrary to the strict principles of political economy; but upon those principles you may not only object to a poor law, but may even go further and object to private charity itself!

The momentous Bill passed rapidly, ending the Elizabethan principle of parochial relief and substituting a Central Board with a network of elected local Guardians.⁵³

Opposition, initially weak, eventually rose to a dominant position among contemporary social movements. In April, John Walter, the owner of *The Times*, told his Berkshire constituents,⁵⁴

I think portions of the measure pregnant with evil: I think it a change in the British Constitution itself: I think it calculated to produce a revolution in the manners and habits of the British people, providing inadequately for its ostensible objects and productive of consequences which cannot be looked at without dismay.

The Times followed its proprietor, and in the Commons a handful of Members (including Attwood, Cobbett and, for a time, Baines) opposed the Bill, but were easily defeated: the Second Reading passed by 299 votes to 20, the Third by 157 to 50. In the Lords, Earl Stanhope and Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, were equally unsuccessful, and the Royal Assent was given on 4 August.

The anti-Poor Law Movement again united ultra-Right and ultra-Left. 'This Bill will totally abrogate all the local government of the Kingdom', declared Cobbett, vowing that 'everything that I can lawfully do, I will do, to prevent its being put into execution'.⁵⁵ Duncombe sent the Bill to Oastler, who showed it to his associates; they declared their complete hostility and resolved to oppose its application in Yorkshire. Traditionalist Tories like Oastler hated the destruction of an ancient social structure, of parochial independence and squire-archic benevolence. 'The very essence of the British Constitution is self government', Oastler told Thornhill, seven years later,

[and] the tendency of every plan of the reformers is centralisation, or, in other words, despotic power . . . such a change cannot take place in England without an entire destruction of the present social system. . . .

He canvassed the Lords, but Wellington shattered his hopes by supporting the Bill, despite Oastler's condemnation of it as

a direct attack on the Constitution, on the magistracy, on the land, on the rights of private property and on the last remaining hopes of industrious poverty.

Kenyon and the Marquess of Salisbury, however, sympathised with Oastler, and old Eldon confirmed his belief in the Bill's 'unconstitutional' character, morbidly expecting a Convention. Oastler attacked the Act in Hobson's new *Argus and Demagogue*:

The Whigs, Tories and Radicals have united, by their leaders in Parliament, to insult, degrade and enslave the poor of England! . . . No man *can* have a 'Title to any property whatever, if the Poor have no Title to their share of the rent of England.

As an 'old-fashioned Church and King Tory', he was shocked at Peel's support for a measure by which

the poor paupers were deprived of their last hope, of their natural, equitable, scriptural and legal right to their share of the rent of the soil.

Oastler always 'viewed the question as between two irreconcilable principles — the parochial or the national system'. Now he expected revolution.⁵⁶

To the factory reformers there seemed a close connection between the New Poor Law and the factory system. The Act's 'Malthusian' inhumanity and Benthamite organisation appeared as further manifestations of their opponents' philosophy. In June Edmund Ashworth, a Quaker Lancashire master and opponent of factory reform, told Chadwick that

I am most anxious that every facility be given to the removal of labourers from one county to another, according to the demand for labour; this would have a tendency to equalise wages, as well as prevent, in degree, some of the turnouts which have of late been so prevalent.

Robert Greg wrote similarly in September, complaining of labour shortages and handloom weavers' 'extravagant wages'. He suggested

that some official channel of communication should be opened in 2 or 3 of our large towns with your office, to which the over-charged parishes should transmit lists of their families. Manufacturers short of labourers, or starting new concerns, might look over the lists and select as they might require (for the variety of our wants is great) large families or small ones, young children or grown-up men, or widows or orphans, &c.

Thus Liberal masters hoped to import Southern workers, to reduce wages and break strikes. Chadwick sympathised with them, and, as secretary to the three Commissioners — Thomas Frankland Lewis, Shaw Lefevre and George Nicholls — he virtually organised the new system. Dr. Kay was given charge

of the migration scheme. Consequently, Oastler maintained that ⁵⁷

the New Poor Law was only one branch of the Factory System, intended to drive the agricultural poor into the Factories.

While visiting London in July, Oastler met the Metropolitan Radicals, and soon started to write for their 'unstamped' Press. 'I differ from you in many things', he told them, 'but I am sure that we shall see no good days till Labour is at least as much protected as Capital.' He gave Wellington the same message :

My Lord Duke, the canker worm of England is the power of unrestricted, *untaxed* Capital. So long as Messrs. Rothschild, Marshall, Morrison and Co. are allowed to '*do what they like with their own*', it is in vain that the Duke of Wellington conquered the world !

And he bluntly told the Duke that,⁵⁸

If this Poor Law Bill passes, the Constitution will be destroyed, and he will be the greatest patriot who can produce the greatest dissatisfaction — and I will strive to be that man.

Frederick Herbert Maberley, the eccentric rector of Great Finborough, who had tried to impeach Wellington over Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1829, started the first protest campaigns in East Anglia, in July.⁵⁹ On Right and Left the factory reformers gained new allies.

VII

In June, having overspent his £300 salary — largely on maintaining Fixby — Oastler tendered his resignation to Thornhill, who refused it and subsequently raised his salary. Thus Oastler could continue to oppose the Poor Law, which Thornhill supported ; but his position was delicate.⁶⁰ While in London, he gave evidence to John Maxwell's Select Committee on Handloom Weavers — who, with their dependants, still amounted to some 840,000 persons. Maxwell was the son and heir of Sir John Maxwell, 7th baronet of Pollock, a Foxite Whig who had campaigned for minimum wages. Angered by Hume's complacent Liberalism, which regarded people like

'stock on a farm', Cobbett told Parliament that it would be better to

drive [some industries] out of the country, out of the world, and into the infernal regions, rather than they should continue to produce such appalling distress.

Nearly a fifth of the inhabitants of two working-class districts in Manchester lived in cellars. Bolton wages amounted to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head daily, and both masters and weavers wanted 'Boards of Trade', to redress their 'loose, unprotected state'. Spitalfields weavers advocated a similar system, under national control. Having witnessed the long agony of the once-prosperous Fixby weavers, Oastler supported such schemes, hoping 'to cut the dreadful power of Capital' — the remote 'money-dealer' who hovered over industry; and 'to give protection to labour' was 'the first duty of Government'. Maxwell's Committee decided that 'some legislative enactment was imperatively necessary', but none was forthcoming.⁶¹ And while power looms and 'Finance Capital' together destroyed their livelihood, the weavers now lost the occasional outdoor relief on which they had relied during 'hard times'.

Old and new controversies now mingled, as the Factory Movement's humanitarian interest extended to the old craftsmen as well as the factory proletariat. 'Unrestrained Machinery must ere long be the Ruin of the Country', proclaimed the Bradford reformers, telling Yorkshire workers that Ten Hours legislation and taxation of machinery must be obtained together. Rider's scurrilous *Demagogue* attacked Baines and the Leeds Liberals; and Oastler told of the weavers' plight in Hetherington's *Guardian*, and condemned Charles Wood's 'base, mean and villainous' act in 'counting-out' Attwood during one of his interminable speeches on currency reform.⁶² The *Bradford Observer* still attacked Bull as 'a Tory Demagogue, under the mask of pleading for the poor Factory Children', and Bull replied with a bitter letter to the Rev. T. R. Taylor and Henry Forbes, two dissenting directors. Tracing the attack to a dissenting minister, one J. Winterbottom of Haworth, Bull visited the local clergyman, Patrick Brontë, and challenged his 'slanderer' to debate. When Winterbottom refused, Bull published a series of diatribes against anonymous nonconformists

who attacked Churchmen in safe anonymity ; if he ever debated with a local dissenter, it would be with a Man —

and with a Man of Truth, of Honour and of Christian Principle, and certainly not with Mr. Winterbottom.

Bull wrote a variety of other pamphlets, ranging from Sunday school prayers to admonitions to parents. As 'the Chaplain to the Ten Hours Bill', he stressed the 'Duty of Ministers of the Gospel to plead the Cause of the Industrious and Oppressed Labourers'. And he told Inspector Rickards that until the Bill passed, 'he would be a thorn in his sides'.⁶³ He rebuked proletarian drunkenness, lectured on thrift, recommended 'Religion . . . Industry and Patriotism' to coal miners and regularly assailed the 'unChristian' Poor Law, which he debated with George Hadfield, a prospective Bradford Liberal candidate, on 28 November. Huddersfield reformers presented a Bible as 'a token of respect' to the energetic little parson, in October.⁶⁴

Oastler supported Bull in a letter refused by the *Observer* but printed in the *Intelligencer*; he roundly condemned Winterbottom as a 'lying, cowardly backbiter and slanderer'. When the *Observer* attacked him, he produced a fantastic *Letter to those Sleek, Pious, Holy and Devout Dissenters, Messrs. Get-All, Keep-All, Grasp-All, Scrape-All, Whip-All, Gull-All, Cheat-All, Cant-All, Work-All, Sneak-All, Lie-Well, Swear-Well, Scratch-Em and Company, the Shareholders in the Bradford Observer* — who were

a few wealthy Millowners (*ci-devant* pedlars, tinkers and tailors), who by means of cheating and lying had managed to scrape some thousands of pounds together ; they were remarkable for their systematic acquirement of every vice, which they attempted to colour with the name of virtue. . . .

Oastler told how the 'Sunday saints and weekday devils' at one time worked their mills until 11.40 p.m. on Saturdays and from 12.20 a.m. on Mondays, and alleged that the 'wealthy, canting, oppressing Capitalists' sometimes 'attacked the virtue of their poor, defenceless mill girls — nay, sometimes took a jaunt of a few weeks with them . . .'. But Oastler's greatest pride was that 'he was the first man to defy the powers of the Commissioners' ; under the Poor Law, 'Christianity, nature, justice,

equity, law, all must yield to Scotch philosophy'. He called for the abolition of indirect taxation, the establishment of Wages Boards and the maintenance of agricultural Protection. And he compared the *Observer*, in a final abusive attack, with 'Judas, the first Dissenter from the Church of Christ'.⁶⁵

Oastler maintained this combination of scurrility and seriousness. In the *Argus and Demagogue* he flayed the Poor Law, Baines and the party spirit, and attacked the high charges on Ramsden's Huddersfield canal.⁶⁶ In the *Agricultural and Industrial Magazine*, he predicted an almost Marxist future, when Finance Capitalism would overwhelm aristocracy, farmers and small masters alike :

The Demon called Liberalism who is now stalking through the land scattering absolute want . . . and the deepest distress . . . will be found to have been the enemy of true religion and of the prosperity and well-being of man.

The only salvation lay in a non-party union for social reform :

to secure real prosperity to this nation, the contentment and happiness of the labouring classes must be the *very first* object with the government.

National policy should include Wages Boards, employment exchanges, peasant smallholdings, adult education, tariff protection, awards for industrial service, recreational facilities, Poor Law reform and the taxation of machinery :

How much more prosperous and happy would a town be having a million of pounds possessed by 1,000 families than if the same sum belonged to one family !

When Wellington expelled the Whigs in November, Oastler told the Duke that the workers were not idle but starving, and urged him to grant them protection.⁶⁷

VIII

Under Althorp's Act, four Factory Inspectors were appointed — Leonard Horner in the North, Robert Rickards in the Midlands, Robert Saunders in the South and East and Thomas Jones Howell in the West — along with a body of superintendents.⁶⁸ They met considerable hostility from both masters and

operatives. Some masters dismissed children entirely, as there were not enough available for relays, and to evade the educational clauses. Rickards lamented the 'utterly impracticable' provisions, and Baines himself declared that

the plan for enforcing education had failed; the object was excellent, but the means of attaining it were ill-judged.

After initial optimism, the Inspectors found opposition growing. At first, Horner had 'a good reception from the mill-owners' in Scotland and Ireland:

They naturally disliked the Act, like any other interference, but they said that as they were to have one, that which had been passed was very little open to objection, and they saw no difficulty in carrying it into effect.

But this state of affairs was short-lived. Marshall reduced hours to 64 weekly, but he was a rare example; Rickards soon reported that Lancashire masters were evading the Act. As reformers had forecast, relays were generally impossible. Within a year, the Inspectors were appealing for changes: ⁶⁹

it will be found extremely difficult in practice, if not wholly impossible, to limit the labour of children who are 12 years of age to 48 hours in the week, without a serious injury to the masters and workpeople, as in many situations it will not be possible to find a sufficient supply of children to work by relays; and unless that plan of working be adopted, adult labour must necessarily be interfered with.

The 8 hours provisions were to extend to 11-year-old children on 1 March 1835 and to 12-year-olds a year later. But already the masters' gloomy prophecies were sustained by the Inspectors, who, as Horner later pointed out,⁷⁰

had no practical experience of the factory system, or of the working of the Act . . . inasmuch as under their instructions they were at that period in communication exclusively with the employers, with the view of making the law acceptable to them, and from some of whom they unwarily adopted suggestions which appeared plausible enough on paper at the time, but which a very short practical acquaintance with the factory system in the cotton districts, when the law was afterwards fairly launched, caused them to repent. . . .

At this time, Howell and Saunders believed that 'under certain circumstances' 10-year-old children could work more than 8 hours; and all the Inspectors thought it 'expedient' to allow children under 9 to work 48 hours weekly in cotton, woollen and flax as well as silk mills.

The reformers were now blamed for the Act's deficiencies; the *Mercury* used the Inspectors' reports to answer their 'gross delusions', and regularly mocked Oastler. When Oastler condemned Baines' 'very unreasonable' charges, in November, the *Mercury* declared that,

When Mr. Richard Oastler chose, in the licence of his scurrilous pen, to designate the Editors of the *Leeds Mercury* as 'liars', and to heap upon them many other epithets of foul abuse, he of course abandoned all claim to appear again in our columns. . . .

Oastler reminded the *Intelligencer* of Baines' 'inflammatory and outrageous' proceedings over Reform, and a bitter argument followed, which closed with the appearance of *A Well-Seasoned Christmas Pie for 'The Great Liar of the North', prepared, cooked, baked and presented by Richard Oastler*, in his customary style.⁷¹

But during 1834 the Commissioners' *Supplementary Reports* were also published, including E. C. Tufnell's sarcastic observations on the reformers, whose charges about cruelty to children were only their 'Parliamentary or public ground'; he was

perfectly satisfied that motives of humanity had not the smallest weight in inducing them to uphold the Ten Hours Bill,

and that 'nothing but evil could come' from such a measure. In his hostile book on trade unionism, Tufnell declared that the spinners' union was the main body supporting the Bill, as a restrictionist measure to maintain wages; and, as the principal employers of children, the spinners were responsible for any cruelties.⁷²

Although the Regenerationists' final strike dates passed unnoticed, the tide of agitation had not ceased. 'Radical Jack', the Earl of Durham, crusaded for 'economy and retrenchment' in the autumn, and another dandified Radical, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, started his long career as Member for Finsbury in

June, after 'lavish expenditure and the most energetic canvassing'.⁷³ Peter Bussey attacked the Poor Law in the *Leeds Times*, which itself condemned the 'abominable enormity' which would make agricultural workers 'serfs and slaves'. Jonathan Lupton of Leeds wanted the Elizabethan system for the aged and children and an insurance system for the able-bodied. The new Act was 'the English Coercion Bill', asserted one Leeds Radical.⁷⁴ Cobbett's assaults on Malthusianism were widely circulated, and Maberley's supporters issued vehement denunciations of the 'Poor Law Starvation Bill'.⁷⁵ The prospective Bradford candidates were assiduously canvassed, and Bussey was condemned for consorting with the 'half-Radical' Hadfield, who supported the Poor Law and opposed factory reform. Harriet Martineau had few allies in defending the Act; to Oastler, she seemed 'a stiff and formal damsel — not unlike an icicle'.⁷⁶

An important new figure now entered the Movement. At 29, Joseph Rayner Stephens was already a man of experience. As Methodist minister in Stockholm, he had been a friend of the Ambassador, Lord Bloomfield, and the young Count Charles de Montalembert, the future disciple of Lamennais. He had settled at Ashton, where his 'Disestablishment' activities led to his expulsion by the Conference of 1834. He was now an independent preacher, announcing a highly personal democratic Toryism to turbulent Lancashire congregations.⁷⁷

In November Manchester Liberals demanded another Reform Ministry, but Fielden passed an amendment thanking the King for dismissing his 'oppressive' Ministers, and Cobbett insisted that Wellington was 'as good a reformer as the Whigs, and more likely to afford relief to the people'. Northern Tories explained that the King had acted like a good factory master ridding himself of bad overlookers.⁷⁸ Some reformers regarded Peel's Ministry as potential allies, but Ashley 'could see nothing worse' — though he reluctantly joined the Government. Oastler was still hopeful enough to advise Wellington on policy, but he had already condemned Peel, with Brougham and Hume, as a 'political economist'. The liberal Tamworth Manifesto only aroused Oastler's Tory suspicions; and Cobbett also protested against it.⁷⁹ In December Preston reformers addressed 'Brother Workmen and Fellow Sufferers', calling for

a revival of the committees under Bradford's leadership. The Radical *True Sun* recalled that the Whigs had

originated, fostered and passed the infamous White Slavery Bill . . . refused to give the Ten Hours Bill and passed a Twelve Hour Humbug.

And on Christmas morning Bradford factory children sang grateful carols at Horton Hall and presented an address to John Wood, before trooping to Bierley for Bull's service.⁸⁰

IX

Early in 1835 the second 'reformed' election campaign commenced. Morpeth and Strickland were again unopposed in the West Riding. Hardy, now a Tory, contested Bradford against Cunliffe-Lister and Hadfield; after a bitter fight, Hardy and Cunliffe-Lister were elected, with 611 and 589 votes to Hadfield's 392.⁸¹ At Leeds Beckett's Toryism delighted Oastler: 'if they can introduce regulations by which labour shall be better paid, for God's sake let them do it', declared the baronet. Unless such a system were established, he believed that

there can be no peace at home, there will be no peace at home, there never ought to be peace at home!

Beckett headed the poll with 1941 to Baines' 1803 votes; William Brougham was 138 behind. After campaigns fought partly on the Poor Law, the reformers were somewhat strengthened. Amid serious rioting, Stuart-Wortley won a Halifax seat by one vote, after what *The Times* considered 'the fiercest opposition perhaps ever recorded'.⁸² General Johnson lost to Blackburne at Huddersfield, by 241 votes to 109. But Cobbett and Fielden were unopposed at Oldham, and Hindley, though narrowly defeated at Warrington, easily beat a Tory and Williams at Ashton.

Oastler republished his attacks on the Poor Law for Bradford operatives, advising them to drop their docile acceptance of party professions; and he printed his letters to Wellington, with a lengthy introduction. He appealed beyond party to an old England of reciprocal rights and affections; to him,

the real national question . . . was neither the Reform of the Church, nor of the Corporations, nor of the Universities, but a Reform in the great general question between Labour and Capital.

Liberal panaceas ignored this vital subject: Free Trade 'meant cheap corn and no money to buy it with'. The ragged working folk around Fixby needed more than Miss Martineau's homilies on late marriages, or the cheap educational tracts sponsored by Brougham, 'the great Westmorland Pauper'. Instead, Oastler appealed for a revitalised Toryism, purged of narrow partisanship and disavowing the 'Spirit of the Age'.⁸³

Early in 1835 the Short Time organisation again grew. Higginbottom and Grant re-established the Manchester group, and in February assured Ashley of their future loyalty. The Bradford men, under Charles Simons, protested against Rickards' encouragement of local masters' demands for modifications of the Act; they recalled that the *Mercury* had taunted them with being 'outbidden in humanity', while now 'the unblushing advocates of Infantile Oppression' blamed reformers for their own faults and advocated an 11 or 12 hours' Bill, claiming that such a measure would not cut wages while a Ten Hours Bill would cause substantial reductions. Against this 'claptrap', the Bradford men pointed out that⁸⁴

The present Act is not that which we recommended, but is that against which we openly and vehemently protested, as vexatious and impracticable.

But this minor 'Ten Hours' revival was soon countered. Henry Ashworth supported his brother's appeals for rural migration schemes,⁸⁵ and one Richard Muggeridge was appointed the Commissioners' migration officer in Manchester. Hostile masters arranged meetings of operatives in several Yorkshire towns to oppose the extension of the 8 hours' restriction to 11-year-olds, in March. Consequently, the 'Ten Hours' men were forced into defending the 1833 Act against its authors.

Enthusiastically supporting the change, Baines followed Senior's view that shorter hours involved proportionate wage cuts:

if the hours of working are reduced from 12 to 10, either the quantity of goods produced must be reduced by one sixth, or one sixth more hands must be employed . . . and the wages . . . must be divided among the larger number henceforth required.

Simons' Bradford committee answered this 'insolent stupidity' of 'that established vehicle of misrepresentation and scurrility', claiming that a Ten Hours Bill would necessitate more employment and machinery and probably increase wages, which unemployment had kept low.⁸⁶ The *Mercury* also commended the importation of rural labour to balance the energetic Keighley reformers. This 'spirit of malignity' probably caused Keighley to be selected to open the reformers' counter-campaign, on 3 March. Thirteen days later, Bull, Boddington and Jabez Smith, a Methodist minister, urged Bradford reformers in the parish church to petition against any alteration except a Ten Hours Act. When Baines told the Commons, on 23 March, that

he would prefer that petitions should not be forwarded from Clergymen, and persons not connected with the trade, who could not know what the requisite hours should be,

the three speakers condemned 'that sort of Liberalism which, at the bidding of Mammon, would seal the lips of a Christian minister', and recalled that clerical emancipationists, who had never seen the West Indies, had not been condemned by Baines.⁸⁷ At Huddersfield, on 23 March, the reformers were refused accommodation by the Methodists, but met in the Primitive Methodist chapel to hear Woodhall, Glendinning, Hanson and Stocks. The Act was 'the creature of the factory masters', Bull told them, but it should be kept until they gained 'Ten Hours'. He considered that the 15 masters at Westminster in 1833 deserved impeachment, and pointed out that the Tolpuddle men had been transported for following Liberal advice to men to 'protect themselves'. The meeting passed motions for 'Ten Hours' and the return of the Dorsetshire labourers.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, Oastler was conducting a similar campaign in the cotton towns. At the Ashton Theatre on 10 March he was supported by Hobson, Grant, Turner, Downes and Edward Hall of Stalybridge. Next day, Grant, Doherty, Condry and Thomas Fielden joined him at the Manchester manor court room. He moved on to Bolton, and ended his tour at a meeting in an Oldham Primitive Methodist chapel on 14 March, after the Methodists had again refused help. As 'a stiff Church and

King man, an old-fashioned Tory', Oastler condemned Wesleyan opponents: he was 'an episcopalian of the first water, a greater Tory than any of them'. If the masters wanted amendments, 'they must take our Ten Hours Bill, without any further agitation', he declared. He quoted Beckett, 'the friend of the little slave and of the little slave's champion', on the necessity for reform: 'these, he knew, were the sentiments not only of himself, but of all *true* ultra-Tories, even of John Fielden, ultra-Radical as he was', and of Cobbett, 'the giant advocate of the rights of the poor'.⁸⁹ In such terms was Tory Democracy proclaimed. In April Oastler explained his aims and hopes to Ashley:

The great points, in my opinion, are, to insist perpetually — the present Act is ENTIRELY the Masters' Act . . . (and) to deny that it was passed in a state of agitation. . . .

But Oastler was now despondent, despite his 'complete Triumphal March':⁹⁰

I have no hope of success. I see the Government, whether Tory, or Whig, are blind, blind as bats, stone blind. What care the People of England about Dissenters, or the Corporations, or O'Connell? Not one rush. *They want bread*, and the Whigs and Tories and Radicals join together in robbing the pauper! Oh, shame, shame, and refuse to protect Labour!!! Oh, what folly. It is *Labour* that supports the Throne, not your Jew with his £10,000,000!!

Oastler's mixture of pessimism, bitterness, hope and melodramatic anger probably represented the feelings of most factory reformers in the spring of 1835.

CHAPTER SIX

REVIVAL

FOLLOWING the Maxwells' lead, Yorkshire handloom weavers had started to organise, and on 21 March 1835 delegates at Bradford formed a county association. Two weeks later, Bradford weavers and employers publicly welcomed the re-appointment of the investigating Committee and petitioned Parliament for protection and wages regulation.¹ But power looms and the great wholesalers — the 'slaughter-houses' of Oastler's speeches — continued to kill handloom weaving, while the easily learned trade continued to attract the unemployed, the unsuccessful and the Irish to its overpopulated ranks. However, the new organisation appealed to the West Riding candidates at Bradford and Halifax, in April, and allied with the factory reformers. When Jeremiah Dewhirst, the weavers' leader, corresponded with Poulett Scrope, Bull corrected his first letter and Oastler largely composed the second.² The weavers' campaign had no effect on Parliament or the economists, but it was one of the stages by which they became the spearhead of Northern militancy.

Peel's brief Ministry collapsed in April and Viscount Melbourne returned to office. The appointment of Morpeth as Irish Secretary caused a West Riding by-election, when Morpeth sought re-election against the first Tory candidate, John Stuart-Wortley, Lord Wharnccliffe's eldest son. Bull appealed to Stuart-Wortley for support in alleviating the 'misery of the industrious Human Machines', by restricting machinery and preventing unethical trade practices : ³

The small Manufacturers or Employers of Handloom Weavers are the only remaining hope of this community — they form a link between labour and independence. Let them be destroyed by Capital and Steam, and we shall drive the labourer to despair. There is not a steady and clever Handloom Weaver who does not

hope to become, at some day, a small employer. IS THIS BRIDGE TO BE BROKEN UP?

But the candidates refused to give pledges, and Morpeth ignored Bull at the Wakefield nomination, whereupon Bull delivered a homily against blind partisanship to the weavers: ⁴

Till you cast away all this PARTY STRIFE, you will continue to be the slaves of CAPITAL. Whigs and Tories alike are deaf to your appeals. They give fair words and smooth smiles, but that is all. . . . The Ten Pound constituency does not appear likely to stand up for you, and therefore I am quite sure you are *justified* in loudly requesting Household Suffrage and the Ballot. . . . When you are ready to ask for *this*, upon the understanding that all *proved* Drunkards, all Hissers, all Groaners and all Brickbat and Bludgeon men shall be disfranchised for seven years, I am ready to support you.

Tory-Radicalism had advanced far in its quest for social justice.

I

The exertions of 1834 appeared to have drained most reformers' energies. Morpeth easily triumphed in May, with 9066 votes to Stuart-Wortley's 6259. Oastler was almost alone in maintaining his activities. The conviction of one Joseph Schofield, a Huddersfield Liberal, dissenter and millowner, who was fined £5 for employing children without age certificates and working one girl for 13 hours continuously, provoked Oastler to write four furious pamphlets; all were addressed to Baines, who chose not to report such cases in the *Mercury*. Oastler told Baines that he was

the champion of a set of interested mill-owners, tyrannical overlookers and drunken parents. . . . Your petitions in favour of child murder are, as they ought to be, the progeny of a set of monsters, from a gang of interested overseers to a banditti [*sic*] of drunken parents. And, allow me to say, Sir, they have met with a most proper guardian and a proper champion in yourself.

To Oastler, the lawbreaking dissenting masters were 'Cardinal legates from the Court of Hell'.⁵

Such an abusive print gained a wide circulation and, said William Moore, caused 'a devil-to-do' in Huddersfield. Oastler soon produced a second epistle, describing the im-

morality and brutality of individual millowners and expressing horror at the sight of Hindley handling the Communion Elements after publicly boasting of breaking the Act. 'These men', Oastler announced, after cataloguing the crimes of the Huddersfield dissenters,

these deacons, are as like the *pure* sample of Christianity *embodied* in Jesus Christ as the Arch Fiend himself! . . . they are just as Holy, Pious (and) Devout as the filthiest strumpet who walks the streets of Leeds, and not one whit more so.

Quoting the *Mercury's* concern at evasions of negro emancipation, Oastler replied: ⁶

Down with Slavery, say I, Baines, and down with your Cant of liberty when British FEMALE Children are by law worked many hours a day more than Adult and MALE Blacks.

Two thousand copies were sold 'like wild fire' by Hobson, now a Leeds printer; and Oastler soon returned to tell Baines,

If you chuse, I will take Yorkshire round, Town by Town; and in each Town, at PUBLIC Meetings, we will enquire the names of 12 of the best masters and 12 of the worst; and I will engage that, on the average, 9, at least, of the BEST, will be Church-goers or Tories, and 9 of the WORST will be Dissenting Whigs.

Wealthy Liberals now used Dissent as 'a political engine to serve Party, tyrannical and jesuitical purposes'. Oastler listed more 'crimes':

. . . as I do know that you are a filthy set, I will tell you so. . . . The people have been humbugged, deluded and deceived long enough by your 'pious' Liberal Cant. They shall now know what tyrants you are.

The paper ended with a savage attack on Moore, a deacon and Huddersfield Liberal leader, a lecher who boasted of his own obscenities: 'the very Beau-Ideal of a Dissenter'.⁷ In a final, jubilant paper in July, Oastler delightedly noted Moore's preparations for a libel suit:

. . . the late Henry Hunt . . . believed this same Moore to be 'one of the most impudent fellows he ever met with in his life' and added, 'his ignorance appears to be equal to his impudence'. This truth, I guess, Mr. Moore will soon furnish me with the opportunity of establishing in a Court of Justice.

Oastler looked forward with relish to the fight with his old enemy, again claiming that Moore was opening his mail.⁸

While the Riding chuckled over these sallies, rather desultory campaigning continued. The last Owenite Congress met at Halifax in April. On 8 May Fielden, Oastler, Bull and the Reverends Joseph Cowell and J. W. Marriott addressed a 'Ten Hours' rally at Todmorden. Next day Oastler gave a militant speech to Chorley reformers in a Primitive Methodist chapel, warning the manufacturers that,⁹

Justice is immutable, and if your capital raises a barrier against it, it will find its level, either by the force of reason and religion, or by the fury of a whirlwind of malice personified in an ocean of blood.

Thereafter, reformers were subdued for some time. But there was considerable activity in private. The Lancashire reformers had arranged for Hindley to introduce a new Ten Hours Bill, with a restriction on power. Oastler was apparently not party to this change of leadership and policy, but knew of and regretted the plan. He distrusted his old schoolfellow; in June he wrote that Hindley had

found that his Ashton 'Nest' would not hold his '11½ hours egg', so he says *now*, it shall be a '10 hours egg'. I'd as soon trust you, Baines, as I would Charles Hindley — and the Devil's Legate as soon as either of you. But I have no doubt Charles will gull the Lads in Lancashire.

In July he hoped, not very optimistically, that Hindley would not compromise.¹⁰

On 23 August Lancashire committee delegates assembled at Preston, openly announced the new policy and solicited support against the parties:

if Labour cries for protection, for cessation from toil, if Industry require that Property should bear its due quota of Taxation, you will soon find Peel, Rice and Hume all 'cheek by jowl'.

They would 'despoil no man of his rightful property', they announced: 'we dream not of any absolute equality of condition — we entertain no visions of a Paradise below'.¹¹ It was now important for proletarian organisations to disclaim any Owenite connections.

A new Ten Hours agitation developed from the conference

in the autumn of 1835. But during the summer the reformers lost two of their champions. Cobbett died in June, after pronouncing final curses on the Poor Law. 'This self-taught peasant', commented *The Times*, 'was perhaps, in some respects, a more extraordinary Englishman than any other of his time.' A month later, on 29 July, Sadler died, after a lingering illness at Belfast. The *Standard* sorrowfully declared him

one of the best and greatest men who ever did honour to the name of Englishman . . . a man whose bright and spotless character affords no shade to set in relief the most brilliant talents. . . .

Disinterested, sincere and fearless, Sadler had fought an uneven battle on every front against the rising tide of Liberal social economics. To Parliamentary contemporaries he had been an old-fashioned 'reactionary' fighting 'Progress'; to Oastler he was 'that heaven-sent man'. The double loss was a blow to the Movement and to Oastler, who knew both men.¹² Despite titular differences, both had proclaimed much the same fundamental social policy to a scornful society. Cobbett's second son, John Morgan, contested the ensuing Oldham by-election, as a Universal Suffrage Radical who 'would never lend a hand in changes which he did not believe to be strictly constitutional'.¹³ The seat was lost to the Tory John Frederick Lees, through the intervention of an Irish demagogue named Feargus O'Connor, whose 32 votes put Cobbett in a minority of 13.

II

Meanwhile, Oastler cemented his alliance with the London Radicals. In June he started to write in the *Weekly Police Gazette*, published by Cleave, Hetherington's ally in the struggle against 'Taxes on Knowledge'. Tory friends protested at this support of 'radical and revolutionary journals', but Oastler explained that he had tried every other form of publicity: 'I want the aid of all parties, and must work on until I succeed'. Workers only read the unstamped papers, and so he ¹⁴

resolved to avail himself of the only medium through weekly periodicals in which he could effectually communicate what he knew and thought on subjects most important to working men.

Through several series of articles, Oastler introduced Metropolitan workmen to Northern conditions and aspirations. Again he condemned party :

How can we expect Labour to be protected when the labourers are always ready to lend themselves to the support of any faction, who will cull out of the dictionary a few cant words and thus beguile them with promises, while they bind them in heavier and stronger chains. . . .

He hoped that workers might break loose from the fatal fascination of party titles, especially those recently proved so derisory : the 'Reformed Parliament' had only secured property and depressed the workers.¹⁵

Oastler made no concession to Radical readers ; he propounded his usual blunt Toryism. But the articles were immediately successful. One Radical agreed that

Mr. Oastler, Tory as he is, does well . . . to caution the suffering people against putting their trust in the efforts, in their favour, of the Whig 'Liberals'. . . .

Cleave declared that Oastler was

entitled not only to the gratitude of those more immediately affected by the cruelties which he discloses, but to the cordial respect of all. . . .

In September Cleave¹⁶

called upon all to agitate for a Short Hours Bill — not one class, but every class of the poor — not one trade, but all trades.

In August Oastler delivered his message in the columns of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, in a series of 'Letters to Mr. Hetherington', regretting that even 'his good friend' accepted party professions at their face value :

Poulett Thomson is a Whig, so is John Maxwell ; Sir Robert Peel is a Tory, so was poor Michael Thomas Sadler ; Joseph Hume is a Radical, so is John Fielden.

His aim was to¹⁷

try to persuade a few labouring men — 1st. to trust God, 2nd. to look at *principles*, not *names*.

In October he extended his series to the *Twopenny Dispatch*, with which the *Guardian* later amalgamated, again defending

his 'Church and King Toryism'. He condemned Hetherington's support of Radical M.P.s: 'he knew of no greater enemies to the rights of the people than the Whig Melbourne, the Tory Peel and the Radical Potter'. In reply, Hetherington denied the Radicalism of Baines and Potter. 'We wish Mr. Oastler was not a Tory', he commented. 'We wish he cared less for Church and King and more for the extension of political rights.'¹⁸

The Radical insistence on political reform involved Oastler in further controversies and explanations. While continuing to describe the factory system and ruefully admitting the support of the Roman Catholic priesthood, he also explained his own philosophy.¹⁹ Though opposed to Parliamentary reform, he hoped to ensure that workers' voices were heard; they should unite nationally, to 'support Labour and maintain the Throne' and follow the masters in electing delegates to canvass Parliament for Poor Law repeal, regulation of hours, control of machinery and the return of the Tolpuddle men — 'till they were released, no labourer was free!' ²⁰ In the background, he regularly described the handloom weavers' tragic conditions.²¹

When Turner asked for Place's comments on the Preston *Address*, the reply was a proof of Oastler's contentions: the Radical Place condemned the paper, as the matter was a question of business, not morality. The weavers had been 'idle . . . ignorant and dissolute . . . debauched . . . besotted . . . selfish', during times of prosperity; and Place told reformers to adopt a policy of 'Self Help':

Leave off railing at others, and go seriously to work for yourselves. 'God helps those who help themselves', says the proverb; and you may depend upon it that you will never be helped by any but yourselves. . . . Your proposed remedy of a short-time bill is even more than absurd. It will never be granted. It ought not to be granted. . . .

Place insisted that workers could prevent the employment of children by refusing to work with them. But the effect of his advice was marred by the conclusion: ²²

I have never seen the inside of a cotton factory. It is almost certain that I shall never see the inside of one. . . . I cannot voluntarily submit to seeing the misery of working it before my eyes. . . .

Turner replied that Place's ignorance of industry was obvious and that the Tolpuddle case proved both the hopelessness of combination and the need for legislation. One Joseph Bramwell answered Place in the *Twopenny Dispatch*, with what Place called 'an unamiable feeling'. Place replied with condescending reviews of the reformers' ideas.²³ The smug ex-tailor thought Oastler 'an odd fellow', adding 'so is every man who thinks for himself'. He 'differed very widely' from Oastler, but recognised his sincerity; he was less charitable to the 'wrong-headed, singularly obstinate' Doherty and 'fanatic' Stephens.²⁴

III

Peel's new Conservative organisation was now taking shape throughout the country. Among the new constituency registration associations, the Operative Conservative Societies were a new and successful venture. The Leeds Society, founded by members of the *Intelligencer* staff in February, with Oastler's motto of 'Altar, Throne and Cottage', pioneered the movement. Attending its dinner in November, with Perring, Hall and Bull, Oastler toasted 'Church and State' and advised members to retain their old Tory title.²⁵ Two days later, at a Bradford Tory dinner, with Rand, Thompson and George Pollard, Busfield spoke with Oastlerite fierceness against the *Mercury*.²⁶ Operative Conservative Societies followed in many towns; ²⁷ they were potential allies of the reformers, generally on the 'Right' of the party.

The Factory Movement also developed. On 17 October Bradford, Manchester, Preston, Chorley, Macclesfield, Bury, Oldham and Ashton delegates met in Manchester, to reorganise the committees, under the Lancashire Central group. Full support was pledged for Hindley's Bill and all committees were ordered to levy 2d. per member for the central treasurers, the Fielden brothers. Grant prepared an *Address* of which even Place could approve.²⁸ But Oastler distrusted the law-evading Hindley, complaining that lax inspection allowed masters to break the Act with impunity. When Charles Thornton was prosecuted in September for over-working Wortley children, he threatened to close his mill rather than conform; sym-

pathetic magistrates fined him 1s., at which Oastler protested.²⁹ By early 1835, 177 owners had been fined; but the Act was widely broken, education was generally ignored and it proved impossible to check ages. Now the masters were anxious to avoid the extension of the 8 hours' restriction to 12-year-olds, due in March 1836. The Inspectors were sympathetic, forecasting 'serious injury to masters and workpeople'; Rickards thought that 'the evil . . . would be intolerable'. In February Saunders reported that he had not prosecuted some offenders, as he expected an amendment. But Rickards found strong support for restriction of the power. 'The steam engine performed all the hard work', he wrote,³⁰

. . . but a steam engine in the hands of an interested and avaricious master was a relentless power to which old and young were equally bound to submit. . . . Their position in these mills was one of thralldom.

In November Bradford reformers published a series of tracts, quoting Sharp, Hawkins, Greg and Kay once more. And on 1 December Manchester, Bolton, Bury, Preston, Oldham and Chorley delegates met Philips, Brotherton, Fielden, Hindley, Potter, John Brocklehurst, M.P. for Macclesfield, and Richard Walker, Member for Bury, in the Albion Hotel at Manchester. Doherty explained the committees' case and the delegates condemned the useless Act and neglectful Inspectors, demanding a Ten Hours Act with restriction of power. When Grant alleged that child piecers walked twenty miles in a day's work, even Fielden doubted him; but Grant substantiated the figures and Fielden later confirmed them. Hindley detailed the Act's shortcomings and promised to introduce the Bill, but hinted at the compromise long feared by Oastler — whereupon Doherty frankly told Hindley that his vacillations had caused 'a strong and rather growing feeling of distrust'.³¹ The conference with such old opponents as Philips and Potter achieved nothing.

The Poor Law migration service was now in operation, thus increasing reformers' anger. Hetherington claimed, in typical style, that the 'atrocious Bill' killed people hourly. Travelling agents sought suitable positions for 'surplus' Southern workers. 'At Derby', reported Langston, of the *Amphill Guardians*,³²

I found an opening for children, from 9 to 17. . . . At Stockport, 2 Families might be sent, with as many children above 10 as can be found, to Mr. Robinson, of Spring Bank. . . . Messrs. Marshall and Sons would be glad of a widow and family, and provided the children were numerous, a family with a father would not be objected to.

When Buckinghamshire labourers expressed doubts about Northern conditions, the *Guardians'* agent, T. I. King, painted visions of shining opportunity: Manchester was 'supposed to turn more actual money than any town in England, or perhaps in the world', and 'the proprietors of the largest factories were at first only labouring mechanics'.³³ Such inducements were no doubt difficult to resist. Greg had several Buckinghamshire families at Styal; Kay reported the engagement of John Howleff and his 4 children at 24s. weekly and of the widowed Hannah Vessey and 5 children at 20s. — both to rise 3s. after a year's satisfactory service.³⁴ The cotton industry urgently needed labour in the boom of 1835; new Ashton and Stalybridge mills were stocked with rural workers. Oastler protested to the Royal Agricultural Society and told Hetherington of pauperised labourers seen around Thornhill's Norfolk estate in December.³⁵ To the factory reformers it seemed, as John Bowen of Bridgewater complained, that ³⁶

The Laws providing for the Relief of the Poor had not been treated, by those experimentalists, as a blessing to be improved, but as a gangrene to be extirpated.

Although there was little campaigning, the 'Factory Question' continued to provoke literary discussion. Dr. Andrew Ure, the popular scientist, published his *Philosophy of Manufactures*, largely as a vindication of the masters, condemning the 'partial, distorted and fictitious . . . mass of defamation' collected in 1832. Legislation had been

instrumental in demoralising both parents and the children, by leading the former to commit perjury and the latter to become habitual liars.

The 1833 education provisions were 'an act of despotism [and] . . . of mock philanthropy'; and the Act was 'the fruitful parent of deceit and perjury to the young operatives and their

guardians, and a law-trap' to the masters. Consequently, many masters 'had no alternative' but to dismiss children, who were

thrown out of the warm spinning-rooms upon the cold world, to exist by beggary or plunder, in idleness, — a life woefully contrasted with their former improving state at the factory and its Sunday school.

Ure insisted that restriction of the 12-year-olds would

aggravate still more the hardships of the poor, and extremely embarrass, if not entirely stop, the conscientious master in his useful toil,

— and would be evaded by 'indignant artisans', thus 'perverting their moral principles'.³⁷

In his massive history of the cotton industry, Baines junior wrote similarly:

the inquiry should be, not if the manufacturing population are subject to the ills common to humanity . . . but what is the condition of the cotton district, compared with that of the working classes elsewhere?

Sadler had collected 'a mass of *ex parte* evidence . . . full of the grossest exaggerations and misstatements'; in fact, 'it was scarcely possible for any employment to be lighter'. The 1833 Commission had 'dissipated the clouds of misrepresentation', but the Act was ruinously impracticable. In place of the reformers' picture of overworked and undernourished families, Baines portrayed the ideal nineteenth-century working man, who³⁸

ate meat every day, wore broadcloth on the Sunday, dressed [his] wife and children well, furnished [his] house with mahogany and carpets, subscribed to publications and passed through life with much of humble respectability.

Appropriately, the volume was dedicated to Poulett Thomson.

Sir George Head, who toured the North in the summer, published a further commentary on industrial conditions. In a Batley shoddy mill he found 'a single whiff of air . . . almost more than could be endured'; and children were covered in dust, which made them look 'like so many brown moths'. At Leeds 'the sun himself was obscured by smoke, as by a natural mist'. But Head thought that³⁹

expressions of morbid sympathy . . . never ceased to paint the situation of the operatives far darker than it was in reality . . . [the children were] a crowd of apparently happy beings, working in lofty, well-ventilated buildings.

There were now 28,771 children in cotton mills alone. But Horner reported the masters' 'strong expectation that the law was to be altered', and Rickards instructed his superintendents to avoid 'a rigorous execution of conformity to all details of the Act'.⁴⁰

IV

In 1836 the Factory Movement fully revived. On 2 January Lancashire delegates reassembled at Manchester, under Doherty. Advising them to canvass M.P.s, Hindley declared that restriction of the moving power was the most vital principle, but expressed doubts about the effects of 'Ten Hours' on exports; he considered that each side should try to prove its case in the Commons,

and in order to give each party fair play, he would pledge himself to divide the House on the 10 hours clause. With regard to the decision to which the Legislature might come, he could only say that, as a practical man, he could not pledge himself to throw up the Bill if it did not obtain all that the operatives desired.

This was scarcely the language expected of the Parliamentary champion, and Bull declared that no reformer should support any measure but the Ten Hours Bill:

ten hours was the least limitation which afforded him, as a Christian instructor, any chance of attempting the religious, moral or literary improvement of his flock.

The delegates left the settlement of this controversy to the future.⁴¹

A new Ten Hours campaign was gradually organised. On 19 January 1000 workers rallied at Ashton, to hear Bull, Hindley, Condy — since 1833 the editor of the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* — and Rayner Stephens. This was Stephens' first public 'Ten Hours' activity, but henceforth his apocalyptic Toryism became increasingly popular. Enthusiastic campaigning followed, each meeting opposing any altera-

tion of Althorp's Act except a Ten Hours measure, and calling for the restriction of machinery. Stephens developed the theme at Bury on 25 February and in Manchester on 2 March, constantly stressing that operatives must

resist by all lawful means . . . any attempt which might be made to repeal the 8 hours' clause . . . on any other condition than that 10 hours for all under 21 years of age be substituted in lieu thereof,

and that education and inspection must be retained. Quoting the 'bill of sale' arranged by Suffolk Guardians with Richard Muggeridge, the migration agent, he angrily condemned 'the resuscitation of slavery in the British dominions'.⁴² In January, Oastler wrote to the Archbishop of York, advocating the revival of Convocation and explaining that

The Factory Question is indeed, my Lord, a Soul question: it is souls against pounds, shillings and pence. . . . The Clergy of the Church of England must either resist the power of Mammon, or renounce their God.

He hoped that 'the Poor Man's Church' would defend the People, as Latimer had done, thus saving the nation from Papism and the workers from tyranny. 'Never were Humanity and Justice so violated, never was a nation so deceived and deluded', as by the 1833 Act; but Oastler insisted on keeping the 8 hours, education and inspection. In Hetherington's *Dispatch* he still condemned the evils of 'untaxed capital, untaxed and unrestricted machinery and unprotected labour'.⁴³

But while reformers thus sought to counter masters' appeals, the elder Baines was also active. In January he met Leeds manufacturers and operatives to support 11 hours legislation, which 400 overlookers were said to favour. Oastler urgently advised the operatives to hold to the Bill and the Act: 'stand firm by these and your emancipation is secured'.⁴⁴ William Duncombe told him of Baines' 'hole and corner' meetings, and rival campaigning obviously became necessary. On 2 February Oastler and Bull jointly disclaimed responsibility for Althorp's Act, while insisting on the three points: 'they would agree to a Ten Hours restriction with Ten Hours for all above 14, holding fast the Eight Hours for all below it'. Oastler endeavoured to expose Baines' 'plot' as widely as possible.⁴⁵ Even the timid

Hindley urged the committees to persist.⁴⁶ And Stephens led six Lancashire delegates — Grant, Turner, Robert Gregson, James Mills, Edward Nuttall and David McWilliams — to Westminster.

The Yorkshire campaign was slow to start, largely because Oastler was engaged in preparing for Moore's case, which was heard by Lord Denman at York on 20 February. Moore claimed £1000 damages for defamation; Blackburne was his counsel, while Oastler defended himself. A succession of witnesses supported Oastler, whose cross-examination and closing speech were praised by Denman. Oastler's attacks on Moore's morals were found justified, while a farthing's damages were awarded against his unproved allegation that Moore had tampered with mails. This resounding victory increased Oastler's prestige; he 'strode from the court in a blaze of glory', commented Sir Francis Doyle, '. . . I do not remember a greater rhetorical victory'.⁴⁷ Oastler was now free to return to the campaign, which began at Bradford on 10 February, when Grant, Hanson, Bull and John Ambler of Halifax opposed any modification of the Act.⁴⁸ In the Commons it was revealed that Rickards had prosecuted 53 persons in Manchester between December 1834 and December 1835, securing 74 convictions: fines totalled £249:12:6. In Leeds 72 people were prosecuted, with 85 convictions and fines of £272:5:6. Huddersfield provided 62 convictions of 35 men, with £268 fines, between June and December.⁴⁹

But if reformers could quote such statistics against law-breaking masters, their opponents were equally buttressed by the Inspectors' reports. In late February 72 Oldham masters memorialised the Government against extending the 8 hours clause to children of 12 and appealed for a Bill allowing children of 11 to 21 to work 69 hours weekly. The Act had injured masters and parents, 'without any advantage resulting to the children themselves'; and any extension would end the employment of all children under 13 and 'render it impossible for [the] Memorialists to work their respective mills with advantage'. The masters 'confidently appealed to the Factory Inspectors of the district for the truth of their assertion'. They asked Fielden for support, but he bluntly replied that their case was 'revolting to his feelings and . . . opposed to his views';

he supported the Ten Hours Bill, though still preferring eight hours.⁵⁰

Generally, the masters were convinced of success; Baines junior thought that 'there could be no doubt that [an] amendment would take place'. Gaskell condemned exaggeration by both sides:

The Factory Commissioners . . . were as much in error, on points of opinion, as many of the theoretical witnesses examined before Mr. Sadler's Committee. . . .

Wages boards and other restrictions 'would be useless'; to him, 'the greatest misfortune' was

the breaking up of family ties, the consequent abolition of the domestic circle and the perversion of all social obligations. . . .

He supported legislation against overworking, although the labour required 'little else but manual dexterity and no physical strength'; but,

The Factories Regulation Act has caused multitudes of these children to be dismissed, but it has only increased the evils it was intended to remedy, and must of necessity be repealed.

To Gaskell, the Act was 'an absurdity, being founded upon the most singular ignorance of the interior economy of mills'; it was 'absurd in its details, complicated in its machinery and worse than useless for the purposes aimed at'.⁵¹

Against this attitude, Fielden delivered a literary onslaught in May, pointing out that,

I am concerned in a very large business myself, and . . . I must be one of the first to be ruined, if foreign competition is to ruin us.

His object was to show that

the workpeople have been and are cruelly treated; that they have not idly asked for protection, but that humanity and justice require it; that we shall do ourselves no harm by granting it to them. . . .

And he explained the reformers' attitude:

The Ministers stand in this position: they threw out Lord Ashley's Ten Hours Bill, because Commissioners of their own told them it did *not give protection to children*, whose labour ought to be restricted to *eight hours*. Then, as their 8 hours Act will

not work pleasantly, upon the advice of their Inspectors, they want to drive us back to *twelve hours*, because that is adequate protection! But we, who contend for the Ten Hours Bill, are now just where we were when the Ministry began to dabble officiously in affairs which it did not understand.

Fielden openly stated that 'the overworking does not apply to children only; the adults are also overworked', for faster machinery had, 'in very many instances, doubled the labour of both'. He did not believe that many children had been dismissed; there were 56,455 children under 13 still working, out of a labour force of 355,373. 'We have nothing to fear from foreign competition', wrote Fielden: 'it was the greatest humbug that Englishmen were ever made to believe in'. And Althorp's measure was ⁵²

the masters' and ministers' Act, and neither should complain of being taken in a trap that they laid themselves.

V

Early in 1836 Oastler continued his efforts to win over the ultra-Radicals. His articles caused such divisions in the Manchester Radical Association that the secretary, C. J. Haslam, asked him to clarify his views on Universal Suffrage. Oastler bluntly replied that

if it were the law of the land next week, it would in a very short time produce universal confusion and would inevitably lead to despotism.

The workers should unite in self-defence and cease agitating for political chimeras. Bussey also solicited Oastler's opinion, and maintained a long discussion. Surprised that so many should be interested in the views of an 'old-fashioned ultra-Tory', Oastler replied,⁵³

I admire the ancient *varied* suffrage much more than the new-fangled 'Ten Pound' suffrage. I believe the men let into Parliament by the 'Ten pounders' are more ignorant, more tyrannical, more selfish and more bloodthirsty than those who formerly occupied their seats. I should rejoice to see the suffrage extended upon the *ancient* and *varied* plan, because then no *one* class would be able to rule *all* the others.

Thus Oastler remained something of an enigma to earnest Radicals; his work was 'excellent, and well calculated to release the working classes from their present miseries', but democrats regretted his uncompromising Toryism, although their journals continued to publish his observations.⁵⁴

On 15 March the situation suddenly altered, when Poulett Thomson proposed a Bill restricting the 8 hours clause to children under 12.⁵⁵ The question was thus taken out of the realms of literary discussion, and the leisurely campaign for Hindley's long-published Bill⁵⁶ became a passionate movement of protest. The Bradford Sunday school teachers had already organised a meeting on 7 March, to ask for effective education clauses and a Ten Hours Bill for all under 21, so that they 'might be able to promote with better effect the Religious Education of the Poor'. Now, prompted by Bull, they addressed Queen Adelaide; but she 'felt she had neither the right nor the ability to discuss' such topics.⁵⁷ The religious tone was maintained. J. C. Franks, vicar of Huddersfield, persuaded 34 Yorkshire clergymen to petition that, to promote education and religion,

it was indispensably necessary that the labour and occupation of the young, especially, should be so arranged and regulated as to allow of proper time and opportunity to attend to those important objects, upon the weekday, as well as upon the Lord's Day.

Young people over 14 needed 'more moral culture and domestic care than at any other period of human existence'. On 21 March Bull arranged a meeting in Christ Church, Bradford, under the 'converted' vicar, William Morgan, and addressed by five other clergymen, including Hall of Idle and Madden of Woodhouse. A petition was adopted and Bull was chosen as delegate to London.⁵⁸ Next day, Bradford parents got up another petition for 'a good Ten Hours Bill', restriction of the power and 'personal punishment' of 'persevering offenders'. And Bull appealed to the King, 'as Father of his People', for⁵⁹

a plain, practicable and effective Ten Hours Bill for all under 21 years of age, excluding from occupation all under 9 years of age.

Oastler joined the campaign at Huddersfield on 23 March, supported by Brook, Hanson, Stocks and the Rev. William Hill, a Bradford Swedenborgian: 'he had the Bible, Truth and

Justice at his back, and in front nothing but gold and Poulett Thomson's Bill'. A week later David McWilliams of Manchester, Hall, Bull and Grant spoke at Halifax.⁶⁰ On 4 April McWilliams joined Hill, Hindley, Grant, Ayrey and Oastler at Leeds. Oastler, Hindley, Bull and Hill moved next day to Bradford, where the chairman, Cunliffe-Lister, excused the masters by blaming overlookers for overworking children; Bull retorted that ⁶¹

there was very often more work required by the master than the overlooker could get out of the children by fair and humane means.

Dewsbury reformers met on the same day, under their new vicar (and former curate), Thomas Allbutt; and Wildman organised a Keighley meeting on Good Friday. Busfeild presided over Bingley's rally on 9 April, delivering 'a very forcible and interesting address', supported by his brother, Walker Busfeild, and Hill, Hammond and John Hall. Hill, Bull and E. M. Hall spoke at Idle on 25 April, and two days later Bull, Morgan, Boddington and Hill spoke at Horton, with Charles Walker, a Bradford master. Hill and Bull closed the campaign with an Otley meeting on 4 May.⁶²

At each meeting the same angry message was sent forth. Again, the entire Yorkshire textile area was in ferment, and every type of publicity was used. In preparation for their meeting on 14 April, the Pudsey reformers explained that they wanted ⁶³

TIME for Rest and for play — yes, for play — for Fireside Improvement, Domestic Improvement, Literary Advancement by Evening Schools and, above all, for Religious Instruction for all Factory Workers. The means we propose is to prevent all Repeal of the present Act, until the Legislature will give us, instead of it, a good effective Ten Hours Bill.

Simultaneously, Stephens was arousing Lancashire audiences to frenzied enthusiasm. Hindley spoke in the Manchester manor court room on 5 April, with Edward Nuttall, the Stockport secretary and a London delegate, who, with Robert Gregson, the Bury delegate, supported Stephens at Oldham on Easter Monday. On 11 April Stephens spoke in Preston and next day joined Fletcher at Bolton, moving to Salford on the

13th.⁶⁴ Pitkeithley even travelled to Glasgow on 29 April, where the militant operatives still talked of direct action. Several Scottish papers supported the reformers: the *Glasgow Courier* condemned Thomson's 'iniquitous' Bill, and *The Constitutional* attacked the 'Liberals and money-worshippers, the leprosy of England', who supported it. 'Mr. Thomson may speak of "starvation" . . .', declared the *Dundee Advertiser*, 'but it is not the first time that prophecies of evil from the enactment of the Factory Act have been falsified . . .'.⁶⁵ In England, old local allies and the London Tory Press, along with the *Christian Advocate*, joined in opposing Thomson.⁶⁶

Inevitably, the campaign produced bitter controversies. Baines alleged that Bradford reformers had broken with Oastler, whose 'rabid declamations . . . had done immense injury to their cause'. Oastler's reply was rejected by the *Mercury*, but the Bradford committee 'most distinctly denied' the charge: they regarded Oastler 'with undiminished, or rather increased affection and esteem . . .'. When Baines rejected this paper also, Oastler published a bitter attack on Baines' youthful immoralities and 'fraud and falsehood' and on Baines junior

— a very saintly-looking personage . . . a thing in human form . . . [and] band-box dandy . . . [famous for his] drunken belchings.

Oastler 'hated these "Liberal" hypocrites; the good masters all wanted to have poor Sadler's Ten Hours Bill'. He maintained his attack: Baines

throve on fraud and falsehood; he became very rich and very proud and very base and very lecherous . . . a smiling, simpering lump of humbug . . . a canting, lying, knavish Liberal.

Oastler condemned the 'palpable, bouncing lie' on the Bradford men. Baines had claimed that the committee had confirmed his allegations, which, replied Oastler, with some justification,⁶⁷

is really the perfection of lying. . . . These men would make one fancy they were born to lie; else, they were born in vain.

In March the reformers were aided by the posthumous publication of Sadler's *Factory Statistics*, analysing various figures on the effects of labour on health and longevity. Sadler urged Dr. Kay and his readers not to ⁶⁸

mix up the sufferings of the poor children with political notions, nor imagine that Corn Laws, competition, taxation and I know not what else besides, have been the real causes of the monstrous cruelties so long inflicted.

On the other hand, Ure told Hindley of modern French and Belgian factories producing superior textiles with lower wages and longer hours; Hindley's Bill

would prove a death-blow to British industry — the most fatal gift which false philanthropy ever made to the working classes.

To Ure, Parliament had 'already gone too far' and 'done great injury to working people burthened with a numerous family'. But Bull urged Hindley to stand fast: 'if the French chose to worship Moloch, let the English be wiser and serve God!' Oastler also advised Hindley against any compromise.⁶⁹ Bull had a more bitter argument with William Gillmor, the curate of Illingworth, who had attacked the reformers' 'riotous assemblies and Bacchanalian orgies'. Bull noted that Gillmor had initially signed a 'Ten Hours' petition, but withdrew on discovering Musgrave's hostility. When Gillmor replied sarcastically, Bull made his usual assertion of a priest's duty to support the workers.⁷⁰ Wisely, Gillmor refused to debate the matter. Tempers on both sides were now strained. The *Manchester Advertiser*, in a famous paragraph, attacked the rival *Guardian* as ⁷¹

the common heap in which every purse-proud booby shoots his basket of dirt and falsehood . . . the foul prostitute and dirty parasite of the worst portion of the millowners.

Stephens' delegates worked hard at Westminster. At a meeting with Fielden, Hindley, Brotherton, Ashley and William Duncombe, they planned Parliamentary opposition to Thomson, virtually restoring leadership to Ashley, who was to move the rejection of Thomson's Bill, or a 10 hours clause; if he succeeded, Hindley was to propose the restriction on power. On 15 March they wrote to every Member.⁷² But other events interested Parliament. Lord William Bentinck, 'the first man of high rank . . . publicly [to] profess ultra-Radical opinions', had been elected for Glasgow. On 14 March, after Wakley's long clamour, Lord John Russell announced the pardon of the

Tolpuddle labourers. And on 22 March Fielden presented James Cobbett's petition against the workhouses' separation of families; in April Cobbett explained that the Commissioners

are no more authorised . . . to separate men from their wives, than . . . to go upon the highway and commit robbery and murder.

He also compared Assistant Commissioner Kay's attractive picture of Manchester in 1835 with Dr. Kay's melancholy portrayal of 1832.⁷³

The factory reformers were no longer 'petitioners' but 'remonstrants': 'petitions . . . seemed of no avail but to excite laughter and be rejected'. Constantly, they recalled that a Government which paid £20 millions compensation to the slave owners had refused to protect many white children, and that while in 1833 13 was the age at which 'nature' fixed adulthood, this 'natural' law was now to be broken by expediency alone.

VI

On 9 May Thomson moved the Second Reading of his Bill. According to Hobhouse's private diaries, he acted 'very indiscreetly and without consulting the Cabinet'⁷⁴ — but his colleagues, including Hobhouse, supported him. Thomson quoted the Inspectors on the impracticability of Althorp's Act and the importance of 12-year-olds working the full day; and he attacked 'the most grievous tyranny' of restricting 'those who, having only their labour to sell, had a right to make the most of it'. Ashley and Poulter opposed him, and Brotherton recalled that every restriction had met prophecies of doom:

the Legislature might as well expect to extract oil from granite, as to obtain anything from the humanity of the worshippers of Mammon.

Fielden supported Ashley's denial that 35,000 children would be dismissed and insisted that arguments on foreign competition were 'the greatest humbug in the world'. Sir John Elley noted the workers' ill-health: 'he would never go to a manufacturing district to select good grenadiers'. Bennet, G. F. Young, Hindley, Goulburn, Finch, Wakley and Lushington all opposed the proposal. 'The present law was a compromise between the

two opposing parties', Inglis recollected, hoping that the children would not lose the benefit. But Baines insisted that factory children were well fed, clothed and lodged and as healthy as any others. Dr. John Bowring stressed the dangers of foreign competition, and Charles Villiers told the House that 'there was no necessary connection between wisdom and benevolence'. Peel supported the amendment, because the Act was not working, and feared the effects of any vigorous measure on 'the Commercial Energies of the country'.⁷⁵

The division was close: Thomson won by 178 votes to 176. The lists provided both surprises and disappointments. Manufacturing Members, as usual, voted almost solidly on the Liberal side: John Heathcoat, Pease, Philips and his cousin, G. R. Philips, Brocklehurst, William Marshall and Edward Strutt all favoured the alteration. With them were ranged the usual Liberal opponents of reform — Baines, Blackburne, Bowring, Potter, Ellice, Grey, Hume, Labouchere, Lefevre, Maule, Morpeth, Russell, Wood, Scrope and Spring Rice. But T. S. Duncombe, Hobhouse and such Tories as Lord George Bentinck, Stuart-Wortley and Beckett also joined them, although Hobhouse found the debate 'very disagreeable' on the 'cruel measure'.⁷⁶ Ashley's supporters were equally mixed, including the Tories Ireland Blackburne of Warrington, William Duncombe, Lord Francis Egerton, Peter Borthwick, Hardy, Gladstone, Colonel Sibthorp, Sir Richard Vyvyan and Lords Pollington and Chandos, the Radicals H. A. Aglionby, Lord William Bentinck, Attwood, Buller and Crawford, and the Whigs Agnew, Gaskell of Wakefield, and Strickland. O'Connell led his three sons and his Irish party into the Liberal lobby. As the majority was so small, Thomson withdrew his Bill.⁷⁷ The surprised reformers were jubilant and optimistic. 'You are denounced as a degraded and dissolute people', declared the London delegates, on their return:

— ignorant, dissatisfied and refractory, not worthy to be trusted even with the time necessary for recreation and repose, and only fitted for drudgery. . . . We have come back victorious, in spite of open foes and rotten friends. . . . But we have *not* got, and they say we shall never have, the Ten Hours Bill. We say we will either have *that*, or something else, a great deal *more* and a good deal *better* — and what say you?

Some optimistic committees again threatened strikes for the eight hours' day.

But the reformers did not neglect to analyse the division lists. Oastler regretted the votes of Beckett and Stuart-Wortley, and urged the Leeds Operative Conservatives to oppose their leader's defection. When William Paul, the Society's secretary, denied that their support was pledged, Oastler replied that Conservatism would sink if it deserted the Bill.⁷⁸ Others assailed Baines, 'the lasting disgrace of Leeds, who, with leathern lungs and brazen front, out-Heroded Herod'.⁷⁹ But if O'Connell had kept his word, reformers estimated that they would have won by 24 — or 33, if manufacturer-M.P.s had abstained. O'Connell was bitterly attacked: 'the sordid Judas . . . betrayed them for gold', asserted *Blackwood's*, for three days later 'the noxious reptile' received 'a purse of £700 from the Unitarian and Dissenting millowners and others'. The Norwich Radical Association

viewed with deep regret the silent vote given by Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P., in favour of an Act to repeal the shortening of hours of labour of children. . . .

Such conduct seemed 'perfectly indefensible'. O'Connell refused to answer such 'exceedingly uncivil' attacks, but they were widely published, with varying estimates of his bribe.⁸⁰ With O'Connell's desertion, the reformers lost Roman Catholic support; Oastler later wrote that,⁸¹

soon after O'Connell received 1,000 £ [*sic*] from Manchester, an order came from their Bishop to his Clergy, that 'they were no longer to interfere in the factory question'.

The Times attacked Thomson, the 'ready tool' and a 'political economist':⁸²

A political economist is an animal with limited brains and altogether destitute of bowels. With moral principles or results he never ventures to trouble himself. . . . The human race, with such a philosopher, are but necessary encumbrances to spinning jennies.

At last, it seemed that Oastler's denunciation of party was having some effect; but Attwood revived his Birmingham Political Union on 23 May, unrealistically combining franchise and currency proposals.

Once again, the Factory Movement extended in the North.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE POOR LAW STRUGGLE

AFTER the failure of Thomson's proposal, the reformers continued their campaign to support Hindley's Bill. On 23 May 1836 a large crowd assembled outside the Bradford court-house to start a new agitation. Fielden threatened that if 'Ten Hours' were not obtained by Act, they would be gained 'in another way'. Cunliffe-Lister, William Walker, William Rand and Bull heard Oastler expand on this theme: 'if they don't give us a ten hours Bill quietly, we will strike and do better'. Next day at Leeds, supported by Hill and Mark Crabtree, Oastler repeated: ¹

If they don't give us a Ten Hours Bill, the children shall not work: that is all. . . . I am tired of reasoning. . . .

As Oastler roared his threats of direct action to vast, excited audiences, the Factory Movement reached its most militant heights. On 22 June the Lancashire Committee, under Doherty, officially adopted the strike threat.

Hindley nervously proposed to introduce his Bill on 23 June. Labouchere, Baines and Hobhouse opposed it, on the grounds that the Act which they had recently tried to amend should be given 'a fair trial'. Philips, Goulburn and Egerton were also hostile, and Ashley and Stuart-Wortley thought it wrong to introduce the proposal at the end of the Session. When Russell again promised stricter enforcement, Hindley withdrew his Bill. Reformers were not surprised; their petitions had called for either Hindley's Bill or observance of Althorp's Act. But Hindley had again demonstrated his uselessness as a leader, and was again succeeded by Ashley.² Nevertheless, Northern reformers continued their vociferous denunciation of 'bullock-breeding Lord Althorp's Act'. Ashton men formed new Dukinfield and Stalybridge committees.³ And on 9 July Lancashire delegates at Manchester declared the

moment critical. 'They promise you now', they wrote,⁴

that Lord Althorp's Bill shall be enforced. Believe them not. They are liars from the beginning. They cannot enforce it, and that they know. They knew it to be impracticable when they passed it. . . . Offer them one sole alternative — a Ten Hours Bill by law, or an Eight Hours Bill by usage.

Althorp's Act, agreed *Blackwood's*,⁵

was concocted in the vilest spirit of hypocrisy and evasion, vicious in its origin and designedly inefficient for practical working.

Militancy was not confined to the North. Though cautioned by Russell and the Bishop of Norwich, Maberley mounted a noisy crusade against the Poor Law, with great rallies at Cambridge and Royston.⁶ Other clergymen opposed the Commissioners in many Southern parishes, aided by *The Times*; ⁷ and Earl Stanhope resigned when he was unable to convert the Central Agricultural Association. In June William Lovett formed his London Working Men's Association, and more extreme Radicals founded a 'Working Men's Universal Suffrage Club'. But again Oastler's hopes for a non-party alliance were doomed; Birmingham Radicals were now discussing household suffrage as the cure for all ills — and O'Connor started a Northern tour in August.

Threatening demands were made not only by working men. While reformers talked of 'Eight Hours' strikes, masters discussed breaking or ignoring the law. On 3 August Halifax masters, meeting in the Old Cock Inn, resolved to ask Government to allow 10-year-olds to work 66 hours weekly, and threatened lockouts at 'every mill in England [for] 3 months . . . to force the Government to alter the law'. Thus intimidation came from both sides. But Oastler quickly replied:

They threw my Bill out — the *Ten Hours Bill*: they passed their own — the *Eight Hours Act*. Then, as soon as their own law came into operation, they tried to repeal it; but I would not have it so. . . .

He reminded the masters that 'the very law of which you complain is your own law'; and he frankly asserted,⁸

the Factory Masters shall remain in the net which they have woven for themselves, until the Government . . . is willing to pass the Ten Hours Bill.

Oastler continued this popular theme. 'Lawbreakers, Tyrants and Murderers!' he began an epistle to hostile manufacturers, quoting medical testimony, regretting Beckett's vote, condemning O'Connell — who 'broke his solemn pledge to fill his empty purse' — and wondering 'how long was England to be humbugged by a Peel'. A Huddersfield master who had wildly talked of shooting Oastler was warned ⁹

that if ever his leaden bullet pierces my heart, 24 hours will not elapse before he meets his victim at the Bar of God.

To friendly millowners, Oastler excused his violence: he was not a willing agitator, but was impelled as 'a man and a Christian'. But again he lashed O'Connell's 'treason': 'he [had] voted against the friends of the factory children, and received his reward — the "Blood-money" paid to him by the "Liberal" tyrants'.¹⁰ Both papers were widely circulated and revealed the Movement's mixture of militant bluster and hopeful optimism through the summer of 1836.

I

A leading apostle of the direct action theme was Stephens, who had already served an 'apprenticeship' in Lancashire and London and now joined the inner leadership of the Movement. In August Ashton reformers gave Oastler a great welcome, when he first appeared with Stephens. The two foremost Northern orators developed their Tory-Radicalism before enthusiastic crowds. The ugly, spectacled minister advocated the treadmill or transportation for law-breaking millowners ¹¹ —

and if they ever came back, they would have them sent to Lancaster Castle, and there hung by the neck.

Stephens shared many beliefs with Oastler. Both were reared in Methodist families, and though both had left the Connexion, they regularly resorted to its vocabulary; they shared a Messianic religious taste, an old-style Toryism and even a dislike of Hindley. From the Ashton meeting, Stephens' strange career as the prophet of the revolutionary North, threatening a terrible retribution for proletarian misery, mounted in importance.

Oastler and Stephens regularly appeared together, preaching an increasingly violent Toryism. But the climax was reached by Oastler, at a great meeting in the Blackburn theatre on 15 September. Local reformers told him of a factory case recently dismissed by the magistrates, one of whom had lightly said, 'That is Oastler's Law: we have nothing to do with that. Take your complaints to him.' An enraged Oastler accepted the challenge, first asking the justices to confirm the story; but they only laughed, while operatives in the crowded hall roared, 'It is true'. Solemnly, Oastler turned to the magistrates' box:

You are regardless of your oaths. You are persons holding property, your only title being the law of the land. Now, if the law of the land . . . is to be disregarded . . . it becomes my duty, as the guardian of the factory children, to enquire whether, in the eye of the law of England, their lives or your spindles are the most entitled to the law's protection.

The magistrates no longer laughed as Oastler explained that if they again rejected factory cases, he would instruct the children how to apply old knitting needles to spindles,

in a way which would teach these law-defying mill-owner magistrates to have respect even to 'Oastler's law', as they had wrongly designated the factory law.

This open incitement to sabotage, the height of Oastler's anger, was rapidly spread by excited workers and became a turning-point in Oastler's career. Six years of constitutional agitation, abuse, expense and unsuccessful toil lay behind the pregnant threat.

The *Manchester Guardian* grossly misrepresented the 'atrociously wicked' speech: Oastler 'was either a madman or a most hardened and desperate villain', who should be restrained by his friends or the law from his 'career of wickedness'. Oastler exposed the distorted and selective report, but stood by his threat. Jeremiah Garnett of the *Guardian* condemned the 'very extraordinary letter' and Oastler's incitement, refused his reply and called him mad. He misjudged his opponent. Rejoicing that 'there was now in the Cotton Lords' Bible ONE Chapter of Truth', Oastler unsuccessfully challenged Garnett to a debate and published the correspondence. 'I prefer the Law to the Needle', he wrote, 'and I would seriously advise

the magistrates no longer to make a plaything of the law.' Noting the Liberal change from semi-Republicanism to 'respectable' law-breaking, he recalled that the 'blustering, "reforming" pimp' young Baines had once threatened to depose the King, while Oastler supported the law. But if millowning justices continued to mock the Act, Oastler would certainly launch his wrecking campaign.¹²

Not only opponents protested at this violence. Bull strongly disagreed, and Hindley vowed never to share Oastler's platform — a resolution which, typically, he soon broke. Ashley, 'exceedingly grieved', broke off relations, and John Wood never wrote to Oastler again. With these painful breaks, Oastler lost the support of many lesser reformers. Yet at this friendless hour, Fielden and Stephens gallantly stood by him; Stephens joined him at a Huddersfield torchlight rally where Oastler talked of ruining machinery with sand.¹³ But from this time, Oastler was considered a menacing 'revolutionary' by respectable folk.

The reformers continued to publicise offences; between May and December there were 822 convictions, with an average penalty of £2: 5s. The Manchester committee employed two 'inspectors' to report on local offenders.¹⁴ Samuel Greg was convicted 12 times between November 1835 and October 1836. Ashley told Parliament of Yorkshire boys who had worked 34 hours in a cellar, and condemned the Inspectors for regarding Sunday school attendance as education under the Act.¹⁵ But magistrates remained lenient to fellow-masters. A Bradford manufacturer, fined 5s. for brutality to a child, promptly dismissed the plaintiff's family. The Home Office, while instructing the Inspectors to apply the Act more rigidly, noted the magistrates' unwillingness to convict. Horner believed that ¹⁶

the continued violation of the law was, in no small degree, to be ascribed to what appeared to him a very mistaken course on the part of many of the magistrates who, to an extraordinary extent, had availed themselves of the power given to them by the Act to mitigate the penalties.

The clauses on education and ages were easily evaded. Medical certificates that a child was 'of the ordinary strength and appearance of a child of at least 9 years of age' were lent and sold; registration of births only began in 1837. The inspection

of Yorkshire, Lancashire, the North Midlands and North Wales broke Rickards' health in June. His successor was Horner, whose area in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the four Northern counties of England was taken by Stuart.

Oastler regularly protested at the evasions. When Leeds magistrates, after sentencing Hobson to six months' imprisonment for selling 'unstamped' journals,¹⁷ merely cautioned a master for breaking Althorp's Act, Oastler bitterly attacked his friend George Goodman, the Liberal Mayor :

Call you this Justice, sir? Blind '*respectability*' trampling upon Law! It is murder, hurling defiance at justice! . . . The people are tired of seeing unstamped sellers and poachers sent by wholesale to prison, and then 5s. and 10s. and 20s. allowed to be paid as the price of 'Child Murder'.

Until recently, Halifax justices had inflicted 1d. fines, but now enforced the law: so masters talked of forcing Government to alter it. 'There is no meanness, no dishonour, they will not stoop to, in order to trap a child', wrote Oastler :

Some of these liberal, dissenting, deaconised blood-hounds used, before they put the breaking-bits on, to work the poor infant slaves till within 20 minutes of the Sabbath morn, and as soon as the clock struck 12 on Sunday night, the slaves were at their mills again! But Sunday was a Holy day! Oh, how they prayed and wept and canted! Six days they lied and cheated and murdered, but the Seventh they did keep Holy, excepting that the Mechanics and Joiners and Chimney Sweepers were all Sabbath Day long as busy as bees, mending, repairing and sweeping in their mills!

The masters dominated the chapels and were pillars of respectable society. But Oastler did not envy 'these pious, canting, murdering, "liberal", "respectable" saints':

You cannot keep Labour down, if you try, much longer; and if some of us must be 'bulleted' by these hateful monsters, we shall soon have bloody times.

Oastler maintained his principal call: ¹⁸

In the name of some Hundreds of Thousands of Working Men, I demand the full enforcement of the Factories Law, against Rich and against Poor. I demand it of you. I demand it of the Bench everywhere. If it is still allowed to sleep, expect the Giant to awake, and that right suddenly.

But, as Horner noted, Magistrates long continued to mitigate penalties.¹⁹

II

By contrast with the law-breakers, some masters fully observed the Act. John Wood and his partner, William Walker, another Tory reformer, scrupulously enforced every clause and maintained a school run by Matthew Balme, a young Tory protégé of Bull.²⁰ Henry McConnell, the largest Manchester employer — ‘a most excellent man’ to Horner — acted similarly.²¹ But such men were exceptions. Despite a cotton crisis and financial troubles, capital expenditure did not slacken: 9 new mills were started at Halifax, 2 in Pudsey and several elsewhere, by such masters as Townend, Cunliffe-Lister, Bright and Jonathan Akroyd. Technical innovation also continued: large numbers of power-looms were bought, and Titus Salt and John Foster began their famous experiments with alpaca wool. Dewsbury built a new Cloth Hall and Bradford opened its Chamber of Commerce.²² And in the pleasanter approaches to each textile town, the masters’ mansions continued to grow.

Despite Russell’s pledges, the Act was still evaded. Having defeated ‘Ten Hours’, the masters were now wrecking their own Act, declared Bradford reformers, asking how the poor could respect laws so easily evaded by the rich. Oastler and Stephens supported them in October.²³ Even the Benthamite *London and Westminster Review* feared that the Act would ‘become a dead letter’, because of ‘the powerful interests’ opposing it. Parents caring only for children’s wages, workmen trying to avoid ‘considerable trouble and some expense’, masters faced by ‘still more trouble and expense’ and reformers trying to gain ‘Ten Hours’ by breaking the Act — all were responsible.²⁴

During the autumn, Dr. Charles Wing of the Royal Metropolitan Hospital for Children commented in Wakley’s *Lancet* on the long hours, bad health, injured and deformed bodies and high temperatures which he found in Manchester mills.²⁵ But the migration scheme continued; Muggeridge wrote in November that children were still needed. ‘Widows with large families especially, and girls, were certain of immediate employ-

ment' in Yorkshire, Tufnell informed the Southern Unions, 'provided they were uncontaminated by pauperism'; and they would earn 'at least double' their usual wages.²⁶ Northern workers opposed this movement, and the scheme was 'at once strange and unaccountable' to Gaskell; it would ²⁷

derange the present trembling balance which connected the human labourer to many mill processes, and lower the value of labour generally.

Maberley vainly assailed 'the abominable Poor Law' and the Government, 'because under neither was God regarded'.²⁸ But Southern labourers were still useful as strike-breakers in the North. Masters were still attempting to break trade unionism, and Preston spinners left work on 7 November after a wage rise was made conditional upon giving up their union.

The reformers' campaign closed with a great rally in the Methodist New Connexion chapel at Oldham on 11 November, under William Fitton. Two masters, James Holloday and John Halliwell, called for full enforcement, supported by Fielden, who again assailed the 'fallacy and bugbear' of fears of foreign competition; he strongly defended Oastler and urged operatives to collect funds for a month's strike. Hindley attacked the Inspectors for assessing children's ages by height, and condemned the violence of Oastler and Stephens. In reply, Stephens told Hindley that 'his tens of thousands had been drawn from the bones and blood of little helpless innocents' and quoted details of cruelties and rack-renting used by Hindley's supporters. Such oppression and the rape of several mill girls made it impossible for Stephens to be 'moderate'; the system was 'bloody and murderous . . . and if it could not be mended, it should be ended'. To Stephens,

The Ten Hours Bill was good as a means to an end, but still, after all, it was a barbarous and cruel bill, and was only valuable and worth struggling for because it would enable them to plant their foot on the first step of the ladder of social improvement and reformation. As such, he advocated it and once more publicly pledged never to cease or slacken his efforts until (it) was theirs; and then, why then, he would start for the 8 hours, and all that followed. . . .

Oastler's vehement oration was the last of the campaign. Unrepentant, he justified his violence by reviewing the magistrates'

perjury and the masters' illegal activities: 'it seemed that they were only to be aroused to a sense of their duty by the power of the knitting needle'. The masters had caused the reformers' violence:

The obstinacy and wickedness of the millowners have placed the question in this awful position — *Shall the Law or the Mills be destroyed?* I do not hint at the destruction of *Property*, mind you. There can be *no Property* where there is *no Law*. It is *the Law alone* that can give a *Title to Property*. . . .

If the evasions continued, he would issue detailed instructions on sabotage. Fielden supported Oastler; to him, as to the wildly cheering audience, it was 'as important a speech as was ever uttered'.²⁹ The speeches were published as a 50-page pamphlet.

The 1836 campaign was the last in which factory reform was the sole main interest, unaccompanied by Poor Law or suffrage agitation. Considerable propaganda was issued. An operative poet explained that 'Not against TOIL, but TOIL'S EXCESS, we pray', and Oastler continued to write for the London Radical Press, now expanding after the reduction of the stamp duties.³⁰ In December Ashley summarised the situation in the *Quarterly Review*, the political editor of which, Croker, had already attacked Liberal manufacturers for wanting to reduce wages through free trade. Ashley declared that Thomson's proposals would

legalise the slavery of some 40,000 children, for the most part females. A more faithless proposal was never made to the integrity and understanding of a legislature. . . .

He pointed out that speedier machinery had 'added five-fold suffering to a period of toil . . . already pronounced well-nigh intolerable'; Althorp's Act had been passed because it was impracticable. And he declared that³¹

One thing is certain — the people of the manufacturing districts . . . are determined that they will never be quiet until Parliament grants them a ten-hours bill. How long is their cry to be trifled with? During this unhappy agitation we can hope for nothing but suspicion, hostility and discontent throughout the manufacturing districts; a total annihilation of all friendliness between employer and employed; and something, perhaps, far worse, in

periods, which may soon come, of suspended labour and commercial revulsion.

But after his energetic campaigning, Oastler's health broke, and the tempestuous year closed quietly, on a note of deceptive calm.

III

During the 1836 campaign, the Movement reached the peak of its rhetorical violence, and its Parliamentary support mounted to a new strength. Committees were active in every factory town, composed principally of Tory and Radical tradesmen, factory operatives and handloom weavers, usually supported by the Anglican clergy, Tory squires and manufacturers and those Radical masters who followed Fielden rather than such 'Liberal-Radicals' as Potter. In addition, Ashley had his own agents, including Grant, William Dodd, 'the Factory Cripple', and Benjamin Jowett, an Evangelical furrier, journalist and father of the future Master of Balliol.³²

The Short Time Committees, like most contemporary working-class organisations, generally met in public houses. During times of activity, they met almost daily in the 'Ship' and 'White Hart' at Huddersfield, the long, low 'New Inn' at Bradford, the 'Cotton Tree' and 'Old Swan' at Manchester, the York Hotel at Todmorden, the 'White Swan' and 'Union Inn' at Leeds, the 'Hope and Anchor' at Dewsbury, the Birstall 'Yew Tree' and — an exception — the Bolton Temperance Hotel. Their meetings were informal: 'it is quite open', said John Lawton of the Manchester committee in 1840, 'and persons attend, if necessary, when they are sitting, whether members or not'. The Manchester committee had 11 members, elected at a general meeting of supporters, with powers of co-option; they met weekly or fortnightly. The committees investigated allegations of local overworking; Lawton was dismissed, after fifteen years' service, on suspicion of having reported his firm. Another task, as Henry Dunn of Glasgow told the same Parliamentary Committee, was the publication of facts about industrial conditions.³³ In addition, reformers still organised petitions and public meetings, usually in Primitive Methodist chapels and Anglican schools. Doherty's

spinners' union resolutely supported the Movement; Doherty explained in 1838 that,³⁴

as soon as a notice appears of the question being mooted in Parliament, a discussion takes place, and so much money is set aside to defray the expense of attending to the proceedings in Parliament, and obtaining information.

The wide organisation, bringing together Tory-Anglican groups and Radical dissenters never entirely died out.

The reformers' work did not immediately subside. In January 1837 Squire Auty, an eccentric Tory printer, himself a former factory boy, revived the Bradford agitation:

the present Factory Act was a mockery of legislation, designed . . . to vex the *humane* factory master . . . to tease and irritate factory adult workers (and) to deprive the children of their full wages. . . .

His committee hired rooms in Butterworth's Buildings and tried to build up a subscribing membership.³⁵ On 24 January delegates assembled at Manchester demanded a Ten Hours Bill, even if it involved increasing children's work:

the children and the adults were so associated in the work they had to do that they could not be separated without inconvenience and loss . . . 10 hours per day of actual labour in factories was as much as ought to be required from either children or adults.

With sympathetic masters, the Lancashire men drafted a 21-clause Bill, which Doherty published.³⁶

The Manchester committee told Russell that 'so long as it remained on the statute book [Althorp's Act] should be vigorously and impartially enforced', and complained that the clauses on holidays and education were neglected by Horner. They held that Horner's recommendation that age should be adduced from height was illegal and evasive; but the Government's 'culpable remissness' was also blamed, although it was 'extremely difficult, if not impossible, to carry [the Act] fully and fairly into operation'.³⁷ Horner claimed to be observing the Act loyally; but the Law Officers confirmed Sir William Follett's view that the instructions on age certificates were not provided for, and Horner issued amended orders. The means of determining ages remained controversial; during 1837 one Edwin Saunders decided that teeth provided the best test.³⁸

In January Wing published a selection of Parliamentary evidence, in order 'to prevent . . . [even] a partial return to the factory system as it existed previous to the year 1833'. His views were plain: 'Ministers bring in an inefficient Bill, and 35,000 children are to suffer for it'. Wing contended that Ashley's Bill 'would protect children better than the present Act', and declared of Ure: ³⁹

Skipping the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, he calls the attention of his readers to the *Paradiso* of the system, and the reader of Dante who should confine his attention to the third great division of his work would form as correct a notion of the whole as the reader of Dr. Ure's publications would of the factory system, from the Doctor's account of it.

For the other side, Robert Hyde Greg answered Ashley's 'illiberal spirit, misstatements and calumnies' and attacked Sadler's Committee's '*ex parte* statements and gross falsehoods and calumnies'. The 1833 Act was passed in haste, because of Tory impatience; charges of industrial ill-health and cruelty were untrue, and old evils could not recur under the 'scrupulously enforced' law. Greg dismissed Fielden as a violent opponent of the Poor Law, and

The soundness of his judgment may still further be impeached, as the advocate for a *legislative interference with wages and the establishment of a board for the regulation of them* . . . [he] can scarcely have heard of the name of Adam Smith.

Greg's own brother's pamphlet was

little more than a college thesis, written before he had any experience and scarcely any acquaintance with factories . . . he imprudently adopted *the misrepresentations of a heated partisan of the Ten Hours Bill*.

Greg was horrified that Ashley's Bill 'was heard without alarm by the Government, the monied interest and the corn monopolists' and supported by the Tories and 'a humane but ignorant public'; it was a device of agitators, ultra-Tories and avaricious operatives, which would reduce production, raise prices, ruin the masters and destroy export chances. 'Our only advantages', insisted Greg, ⁴⁰

consist in cheap machinery and low rates of interest. By restricting our mills to 69 hours a week, we have given up these

advantages; by restricting them to 58, we not only annihilate them, but *hand them over to the enemy*.

He protested against Horner's prosecutions; he was himself regularly convicted of overworking children. The bad conditions of his female 'apprentices' were investigated by Liverpool workhouse authorities, after clamour by Manchester reformers. And despite all his gloomy prophecies, he was building a new mill.⁴¹

In March Senior told Thomson that the large fixed capital of the cotton industry 'made long hours of work desirable [and] the extraordinary lightness of the labour . . . rendered them practicable'; he calculated that 'the whole net profit was derived *from the last hour*'. Consultations with Ashworth and others convinced him that

the exceeding easiness of cotton factory labour renders long hours of work *practicable*. . . . The work, in fact, is . . . mere confinement, attention and attendance.

Senior concluded that

Any plan which reduces the present comparatively short hours must either destroy profit, or reduce wages to the Irish standard, or raise the price . . . a ten hours bill would be utterly ruinous. And I do not believe that any restriction of the present hours of work could safely be made.

He ascribed the Ten Hours agitation to the spinners, who, having been defeated,

are endeavouring by every means to impede the working of the existing Act and to render its enactments vexatious or nugatory. . . .

And he opposed prosecutions and any further interference: 'the manufacturer is tired of regulations — what he asks is tranquility — *implora pace*'.

Senior was 'somewhat alarmed' in April at rumours of stronger enforcement, especially the proposal to prevent mill-owning justices from hearing factory cases; this

would . . . leave the enforcement of the Act to the clergy and country gentlemen — classes generally opposed to the millowners in habits and politics, and without practical knowledge of the system.

Legislation should simply 'enforce ventilation and drainage and give means and motives to education'. While agreeing on 'the most fatal consequences' of Ashley's Bill, Horner attacked Senior's naïve acceptance of masters' opinions: 'very many millowners . . . cared not a straw for the children, so long as they could turn them well to money account'. He corroborated Senior's attacks on reformers, believed that Parliament must firmly deny restriction to adults, but insisted that he had seen magistrates dismiss charges against their own relations. But Senior continued his researches. Thompson of Clitheroe told him that restriction of calico printing 'would destroy the trade and involve masters and labourers in common ruin', for 'the child was actually part of a machine'. Edmund Ashworth 'never expected a law to be well observed, unless obedience was made the interest of those affected by it', admitted employing children without age certificates — 'otherwise the machinery must remain idle' — and asserted that Horner's prosecutions were trivial. A fortnight later the pious Quaker complained that he was about to be prosecuted for breaking 'this absurd and oppressive law' by employing under-age children. Senior had intended to collect private information to counter Ashley, but in June he published his researches, hoping for improved education and noting ⁴²

the absurdity of imposing any additional restrictions on the cotton trade [and] the necessity, if we wish to render the Factory Act useful, or even tolerable, of amending some of its existing enactments.

But the commercial depression advanced during 1837, rendering such arguments unnecessary. Inevitably, the handloom weavers suffered most. Only some 1200 remained in Leeds, but they were still numerous in the clothing villages, such as Horton, Clayton, Thornton, Denholme, Allerton and Wibsey near Bradford (where they numbered 14,000 and formed a noisy Radical element),⁴³ and at Horsforth, Rawdon, Yeadon and Guiseley near Leeds. At Bolton they formed around a third of the cotton labour force of about 1300. At Keighley they engaged in hopeless old-style riots; at Horton they formed a vigorous Working Men's Association.⁴⁴ At Miles Platting ⁴⁵

many . . . did not find half employment; others were unable to earn more than 6s. or 7s. per week, and the most experienced

and industrious . . . by working 14 hours per day, frequently obtained . . . only 12s. per week.

But the depression also affected factory operatives. There was serious unemployment at Manchester, where, in April,⁴⁶

many of the factories were working only 4 days a week, and some thousands of the handloom weavers had been discharged.

Seventeen of the 28 Leeds flax firms failed during 1837.⁴⁷ And unemployment rose throughout the North, as the bankruptcy lists extended. But, as Mark Philips remarked, 'no class . . . experienced such frequent and severe privations as the handloom weavers'. When Maxwell obtained another slow enquiry, by a Royal Commission, the Spitalfields men asked Oastler's friend, William Atkinson, a London merchant, to represent them; but his evidence was refused.⁴⁸ And the enquiry produced no action.

Ashley despairingly dropped his Bill, planned for 6 April, fearing to increase children's hours.⁴⁹ But already Northern reformers were devoting their attention to a new menace. At the Oldham rally in 1836 Stephens had scathingly condemned 'that worst of all bad laws', the Poor Law Amendment Act, and the 'legal slave brokers' who sold Southern labourers to Northern industrialists. The migration scheme was stopped in May, but suspicions were unallayed. 'The connection between this accursed Poor Law Bill and the Factory System is intricate and inseparable', declared Stephens; and Oastler said much the same in a letter to Peel.⁵⁰ The Factory Movement now turned to deal with this connection.

IV

Despite spasmodic resistance, the Poor Law Commissioners had organised the Southern 'Unions' fairly easily, and costs were reduced from over £7,000,000 in 1832 to under £5,000,000 in 1836; by its principal test, the Act was a success. In January 1837 the officials optimistically moved North. But here conditions were very different. The unfair and degrading 'Speenhamland' system was virtually unknown; occasional outdoor relief during depressions was an unemployment benefit, rather than a wage subsidy. And the fiercely independent working

people of Lancashire and Yorkshire were more militant than the cowed populace of sleepy Southern counties. Already aroused against the migration scheme, the plan to force applicants into designedly unpleasant workhouses and the refusal of outdoor relief, they now saw the Assistant Commissioners arrive, with their bleak Benthamite plans, in the middle of a disastrous depression.

The factory reformers planned a desperate defence of local tradition against the bureaucratic 'tyranny' of Somerset House. Class-conscious Radicalism, thwarted humanitarianism and Cobbett-style sentimentality combined with Biblical fervour in a long rearguard battle for the 'little platoon', established social custom and neighbourly charity. The cause appealed as much to Tories as to Radicals. Assistant Commissioner Charles Mott told Oastler that ⁵¹

The object in building these union houses was to establish therein a discipline so severe and repulsive as to make them a terror to the poor and prevent them from entering. By that test our principles will be tried. . . .

The reformers reacted sharply to this experiment in the hedonistic calculus. To them, the Law was another plot of their old opponents, and now they were to be led into wider and more dangerous fields.

When Assistant-Commissioner Power met Huddersfield officials in the George Inn on 10 January, market-day crowds stormed the room, and one Christopher Tinker advised the labourers to

mark their names on a bit of lead, put it into a rifle, and send it through the first man that attempted to put the law into force.

Four days later, O'Connor arrived to address local Radicals. A blustering, demagogic Irish egoist, O'Connor had recently established a reputation by touring Scotland and the North. Oastler joined the demonstration and furiously denounced the Poor Law :

I am proud to find that a Tory and a Radical can yet meet together, to advocate the Christian and natural rights of poverty and Labour. Sorry I am that you will not find many Tories willing to rub off their party prejudices. . . . I do feel proud to stand by that Radical Patriot who is banished from his native land by the most

rapacious beggar that ever stole a potato from a starving Irish pauper.

Thus, still attacking O'Connell, the 'out-and-out Tory' Oastler welcomed the new demagogue. He then condemned the 'three stinking commissioned funguses' and the

Act of Treason against the Constitution, Christianity, the State and the King, as well as against the Poor.

He vowed to refuse his rates; no true Tory could support the Commission, which broke the 'social compact' and every teaching of the Bible. Oastler advocated a mammoth resistance movement against the 'damnable . . . infernal, anti-Christian, unsocial' Act — 'the Devil's own spawn, begotten by him when in a very bad humour'. There must be no compromise, no 'fair trial':

it is the Catechism of Hell! . . . the Devil's own Book! It must be *burnt* out and out *burnt* . . . 'Reform' Hell, if you can!

Published as a 24-page pamphlet by Hetherington and Hobson, the speech served as a clarion call to the North.⁵²

While O'Connor sealed his compact with the Northern Tory-Radicals by toasting Stephens and the Ten Hours Bill at a Stalybridge dinner,⁵³ a vast protest movement gathered force. A Fixby meeting unanimously opposed the Act. Rallies were arranged at Salford, Oldham, Drighlington, Bury, Bolton, Middleton, Horbury, Halifax, Bradford, Tong, Dewsbury and Huddersfield, along with scores of village meetings.⁵⁴ Bull led Bradford opposition, speaking in Christ Church school on 31 January about cruelties perpetrated in Southern workhouses — a girl being flogged and a pauper committing suicide rather than enter. On 17 January a new Bradford committee was formed to organise resistance in the 20 townships of the proposed Union, declaring that 'this Poor Law and the present Factory Act were designed to be co-workers for the oppression of the poor'.⁵⁵

The movement quickly spread. Great Ouseburn and Todmorden refused to implement the Act. Wildman and Weatherhead led a riotous Keighley demonstration which drove Power from the town.⁵⁶ When the Huddersfield board met on 15 February, Oastler's friend, Joseph Armitage of Milnsbridge, a

Tory millowner and landowner, succeeded in postponing business. There was considerable exaggeration in the stories told about the Act. Bull's allegations were challenged by the Commissioners, and he subsequently had to modify them: the girl had been hit, not flogged; the suicide had actually occurred. The emotions of the moment exercised a powerful influence. 'I hear', wrote Bull,⁵⁷

the suppressed but powerful and Heaven-rending moan of the widow, of the fatherless and of the friendless, saying, 'Lord, how long?'

If, during the subsequent campaign, bleak facts were often made darker by enraged speakers, there were always real, well-authenticated examples to support their general attack; and there was some justification, too, for the reformers' rage, in the overbearing tactlessness of the officials.

The agitators varied from Operative Conservatives to the half-insane Augustus Beaumont of the *Northern Liberator*. Oastler impartially blamed all parties for the Act, while the socialistic, 32-year-old Bronterre O'Brien saw it as

the last, rotten, blood-stained prop by which the *money-master* hoped to sustain the tottering fabric of his cannibal system. . . .

The Reform Act, he declared, had already 'united all *property* against all *poverty*'.⁵⁸ Stanhope announced that 'no consideration' would make him desert the workers, and in the Crown and Anchor Tavern on 27 February attacked the economists who treated the workers as mere animals and the 'worse than negro slavery . . . in the factories'. He believed that the Guardians would be 'men of straw, mere puppets', and quoted Eldon against the Act's legality. A Parliament including workers' representatives would never have passed the Bill, and 'an unreformed House of Commons would never have dared to propose it'.⁵⁹ The eccentric son of the still more eccentric 'Citizen Stanhope' now became Oastler's ally. On 4 March he chaired a London meeting to unite parochial resistance; the speakers were Sir S. Swithin Whalley, M.P., Maberley and Dr. Wade, the Radical vicar of Warwick.⁶⁰

Many priests were active in the agitation. Allbutt and Bull spoke at Dewsbury, Fawcett at Bierley and Morgan at Bradford. Brontë protested at Haworth and in the *Leeds Intelligencer*;

and John Sharp, vicar of Horbury, joined the movement.⁶¹ Place, whom Beaumont later called 'the very head and chief, life and soul' of the Act, failed to convert 'Hodgskinite' London workmen to his liberalism.⁶² On 28 February the London Working Men's Association demanded universal suffrage, with the support of O'Connor, an honorary member. O'Connor had broken with his old leader, O'Connell, partly because of his⁶³

black act, one which no length of life would blot out . . . his vote upon the Factory Question.

Through O'Connor, the Northern agitation was linked with wider Radical movements; and through it, O'Connor became a leader.

On 6 March Bradford reformers rallied to hear such Tory leaders as Thompson, Joshua Pollard and Johnson Atkinson Busfield, along with Bull and Morgan, and sent petitions to Hardy and Stanhope.⁶⁴ Two days later Yorkshire delegates met at Bradford to plan a county organisation with a central committee under Stocks.⁶⁵ Opponents of the Poor Law naturally looked to their leaders' home towns for an example, which Huddersfield gave on 3 April, when a mob forced the Guardians to adjourn for two months. But Commissioner Lewis complained to his friend Thornhill, who ordered his Fixby tenants to elect a Guardian forthwith. This was a blow to Oastler, who was in a difficult position, still owing his employer £2264. But he would 'forfeit everything, even life, if needful, rather than in any way sanction the diabolical New Poor Law' and warned Thornhill that 'it would, if enforced, put an end to rent days'. Oastler again explained to the portly absentee: ⁶⁶

If this accursed law is to be countenanced, then away with rents — I am sure of it. . . . My living is in your hands — my conscience is my own.

V

A literary campaign developed during 1837. 'A Freeman of Exeter' urged labourers in every parish to petition against the Poor Law.⁶⁷ One William Denison affirmed that the system ⁶⁸

pressed most grievously upon the able-bodied labourer with a family [and] the able-bodied widow with a family, and had tended

to produce a diminution in the amount doled out to the aged and infirm.

Samuel Gower, a Holmfirth surgeon, attacked the separation of families and advocated the restoration of Elizabethan principles. This separation and the severe workhouse discipline constituted 'a direct violation of the law of God' to Robert Nicholls of Bourne.⁶⁹ His allegation that local Guardians behaved unnecessarily harshly was taken up by Bowen, himself a Guardian, and Robert Blakey, the Mayor of Morpeth, who urged workers to spurn any supporter of the Act, however 'liberal'.⁷⁰ Fletcher of Bury bitterly argued with Chadwick over the migration scheme : ⁷¹

The existing Factory and pauper systems [were] monstrous Whig engines for dealing destruction upon thousands of our indigent and infant population. . . .

Alarmed Liberals defended the Act by describing previous dreadful conditions in some Southern areas.⁷² But a Huddersfield writer mocked their pleas for a 'fair trial'. The Law was a Whig measure, the reformers explained : ⁷³

It was equally true that many Tories and many Radicals in Parliament supported it. But it was, nevertheless, a fact that some Tories and some Radicals in Parliament, and out of Parliament the Tories and Radicals almost *en masse* opposed it.

The Law was so 'detestable and despotic', to Stanhope, that 'instead of being amended, [it] ought to be immediately and entirely repealed'. He advocated an organisation to work for industrial reform, Protection, social reform and repeal.⁷⁴ Samuel Roberts, a Sheffield Tory silversmith, had supported the old 'wise and magnanimous' system since 1819. In 1838 he condemned Brougham for perpetrating 'the foulest, most unfounded, oppressive and destructive calumny' on the workers, with the un-Christian, unconstitutional and unsocial Act. He linked the Poor Law with the factory system :

wherever a cotton mill is erected . . . poison, disease and blight are spread around. . . .

And he shared traditionalists' suspicions of the 'hard hearts, unfeeling dispositions and unyieldingness' of the all-powerful

Commissioners. Roberts organised Sheffield resistance, and urged the clergy to support the 'religious and moral' cause.⁷⁵

The appeals for religious support had considerable success. The Anglican quarterly declared that ⁷⁶

Every man who is not cut out for a tyrant or a slave must know, think and feel that a people so cruelly scourged and oppressed are justified in their resistance.

Some Radicals irrelevantly adopted Cobbett's quaint views on the Reformation; having read Lingard, the Nottingham Working Men's Association even professed to find a connection between the Church and the 'inhuman, immoral and un-Christian' Act.⁷⁷ But many Anglicans followed the lead of Maberley and Bull. W. J. Butler, rector of S. Nicholas, Nottingham, supported Oastler, though advising moderation and condemning the violence of Bull and Stephens. William Carus Wilson, the Evangelical rector of Whittington, of whom Charlotte Brontë was to paint a terrifying picture in *Jane Eyre*, did not favour total repeal, but considered parts of the Act 'most oppressive and reprehensible'; they had 'certainly the aspect of making poverty a crime'.⁷⁸

John Thomas Perceval declared that the Act must be ended, to forestall revolution: 'the State (had) betrayed the poor' by handing them to 'men of a suspicious, if not a decidedly evil spirit'. George Giles Vincent believed that the Act 'let in the basest and meanest qualities of human nature'; but such 'a positive immoral and bad law' nullified the subject's obedience. Pauper deaths should be regarded as murders.⁷⁹ Few writers followed Harriet Martineau in praising the Act, the Rev. Sidney Godolphin-Osborne in commending obedience to it, or the Rev. F. Close of Cheltenham, who condemned the old system for 'unconsciously supporting beer shops and ale houses' — and quoted S. Paul as an authority against outdoor relief.⁸⁰

VI

In April 1837 the death of Blackburne caused a Huddersfield by-election. Local Tories and Radicals, under Whitacre and Stocks, selected Oastler as their joint candidate against Edward Ellice, a nephew of Earl Grey. Although Leeds Radicals

would not aid such 'a fanatical Churchman and Winchilsea Tory', Huddersfield reformers were united : ⁸¹

It was time to distinguish between words and deeds, promisers and performers, and to cling to honest, straightforward friends, rather than shuffling, time-serving adventurers, nicknamed 'liberals'.

Stanhope also commended Oastler's candidature, and Stephens urged workers to boycott the shops and taverns of Ellice's supporters. Lancashire men canvassed the constituency, and Oastler addressed nightly rallies, while Ellice, who opposed factory and Poor Law reform, was shouted down. As the excitement mounted in the first week of May, special constables were sworn in and a troop of dragoons was held in reserve. Oastler triumphed at the nomination on 5 May, but next day Ellice won by 340 votes to 290. 'No lives were lost', observed the *Morning Chronicle*,

but no thanks to the Tories for this. They have covered themselves with deep disgrace by making common cause with such a fellow as Oastler . . . whose principles are utterly subversive of law and order. . . .

Oastler was bitterly disappointed. 'The show of hands', he claimed later, ⁸²

was at least 500 to 1 in my favour ; but Mr. Ellice, my opponent, was supported by the influence of Sir John Ramsden, Bart., who is a Whig, and the owner of every house in the town, save one.

Duncombe presented two petitions against the result, but in vain.

On Whit Tuesday, 15 May, the long-planned Riding rally against the Poor Law was held on Hartshead Moor, attended by a crowd variously estimated at between 100,000 and 250,000. Speakers included Oastler, Stephens, Stocks, Pitkeithley, Hobson, Fielden, O'Connor, O'Brien, Owen and Hetherington, representing the London Working Men's Association — a select body in contact with Radical M.P.s and including Owen, O'Connor, Oastler and Wade as honorary members. 'Sooner than sit down with this Bill', roared Stephens, 'they would light the tocsin of anarchy.' ⁸³ Despite trouble with suffrage reformers, the meeting achieved great publicity. When Baines

wrote that it consisted of 'the most violent, perverse and wrong-headed men . . . in England', demonstrators burned his effigy throughout Yorkshire.

The Huddersfield struggle continued. On 5 June a great crowd stormed the Guardians' meeting and sacked the work-house. Tory magistrates refused to summon troops and again outvoted the Liberals; only Oastler's influence saved William Swaine, the Liberal chairman, from being assaulted. A week later the Board considered the Commissioners' urgent order to appoint a secretary, and, while troops waited in case of trouble, proceeded to adjourn all business for three months.⁸⁴ But opposition to the Act came from many sources. The Bishop of Exeter maintained a personal campaign in the Lords. O'Connor and O'Brien addressed a Strand meeting

for universal suffrage, Protection to Native Industry and the total abolition of the infamous Poor Law Bill.

Scores of parish meetings recorded their protests. And Yorkshire workmen frightened the magistrates with an orgy of bonfires and effigy-burning.⁸⁵ On 20 June the death of William IV precipitated another General Election.

While London and Birmingham Radicals concentrated on advocating extension of the suffrage, the Northern election campaign was largely fought over the Poor Law. Hardy's fellow Tory at Bradford, William Busfield,

would never cease from his exertions till it had been blotted from the Statute Book, and Poverty was no longer treated as a crime.

Thompson, the Tory chairman, and the Operative Conservatives joined him in supporting 'Altar, Throne and Cottage', wide industrial reform and the 'total and immediate repeal' of the Poor Law.⁸⁶ While Disraeli lashed the Act at Maidstone, many Northern Tories made opposition a cardinal point of their policy. Beckett assailed the Act at Leeds and Oastler, more violently, at Huddersfield.⁸⁷ Ellice had moved to the quieter S. Andrews burghs, and the Whig candidate was now William Crompton Stansfield, the squire of Esholt. Oastler's Radical supporters again threatened boycotts and broke up Stansfield's meetings: 'the highroad to the Bastille and low wages was through the shop door of a Stansfield voter'. Hanson

compiled a fantastically phrased attack on Ramsden's 'rotten Whig serf-booth', and supported Oastler as 'the man of the people'. Radicals informed the electors that supporters of the 'cruel, disgusting, atrocious law' should vote for Morpeth, Strickland and Stansfield, and

All those who *hate* that law and love their wives and children, would vote for Wortley and for Oastler.

Oastler overwhelmingly carried the show of hands. But his opposition to Roman Catholic Emancipation lost Irish support. After a riotous polling day, when hussars cleared the streets, Oastler was defeated by 22 votes out of 624.⁸⁸

The West Riding Tories were badly defeated. Hardy and Busfeild were easily beaten at Bradford by Cunliffe-Lister and Busfeild's Liberal uncle, another William Busfeild. James Stuart-Wortley lost Halifax to Edward Protheroe and Wood. Baines and Sir William Molesworth defeated Beckett at Leeds. Nor were Lancashire results much better. Disgusted by Hindley's muddling, Stephens fought Ashton, but gained only 19 votes; Hindley retained the seat. Like Oastler, Stephens refused the support of James Bernard's 'Central National Association', which favoured Poor Law repeal, an Eight Hours Bill, universal suffrage and currency reform. James Cobbett was defeated at Bury and O'Connor at Preston; and Thomson and Philips easily retained Manchester against Gladstone. But Johnson, Fielden and Brotherton were all re-elected.

Oastler and O'Connor rallied their supporters to 'give the Execrable Law its Death Blow', at the West Riding nomination on 31 July, when vast crowds assembled before the hustings at Wakefield court-house. Oastler and his bodyguard, almost ambushed *en route*, joined O'Connor, Bull, the Hon. W. S. Lascelles, Beckett, Hamond Roberson, Monckton Milnes and other Tories in supporting John Stuart-Wortley. Morpeth and Strickland were backed by Sir Francis Wood, Baines, Akroyd, Sir Edward Vavasour, Francis Fawkes and other Whig and Liberal gentry and manufacturers. After serious fighting around Oastler's group, the meeting broke in pandemonium, and two men were killed and many injured. Next day, as arguments began over the responsibility, Morpeth and Strickland were elected, with 12,576 and 11,892 votes to Stuart-Wortley's

11,489. The Whig-Liberal Press — ‘from the *Morning Chronicle* down to the very dregs, even to the *Leeds Mercury*’, said Oastler — blamed him for the notorious affair; he blamed drunken opponents, in an abusive letter to Morpeth.⁸⁹ James Stuart-Wortley told his mother that ‘a violent and most disgraceful riot [was] commenced by the Whigs, as was admitted by their leaders’; he was among those injured. Local fights continued later.⁹⁰

Tempers remained high. George Loveless of Tolpuddle, newly returned from Australia, bitterly assailed the Whigs who had transported him. Cleave, Hetherington and Henry Vincent proselytised the North for the suffrage agitations, and O’Connor announced his plan to publish a new Radical journal.⁹¹ In September Hobson and Rider helped to form a Leeds Working Men’s Association. Glasgow cotton workers organised several violent strikes, eventually suppressed by Sheriff Alison; subsequent transportations further increased the bitterness. Maberley was arrested in July, and the North was strongly garrisoned by troops. But the agitation continued, with mounting intensity.

VII

Before merging with the wider Radical movement, the Poor Law agitation reached a militant climax. In September Oastler advised his supporters to persevere in their ‘virtuous deeds’,⁹² and the counsel was followed. Tory Guardians continued to defer Huddersfield business, and on 30 October an angry mob invaded Power’s meeting with the Bradford Board.⁹³ Reginald John Richardson, a violent ultra-Radical, organised an active South Lancashire Anti-Poor Law Association.⁹⁴ But ‘missionaries’ from the suffrage groups continued to tour the North. In December Muntz and Douglas of Birmingham called for Radical unity to support universal suffrage, which Thomas Attwood now embraced; in May 1838 they sent organisers North, to canvass for their National Petition, soon to be followed by advocates of Lovett’s People’s Charter.

But the Poor Law agitators never forgot their original aim of factory reform. When Baines called an ‘Eleven Hours’ meeting in Leeds court-house, at short notice in November, the

committees organised a large attendance. On 6 and 7 November Stephens was selected to represent Charlestown, Ashton and Stalybridge against 'the plot . . . [so] abhorrent to humanity and repugnant to justice'. Hobson of Leeds, McWilliams of the Lancashire committee, Buchanan of Huddersfield, Ambler of Halifax and Douthwaite of Bradford joined him against the Liberal 'new' committee at Leeds. Stephens delivered some of his notorious warnings :

There was not a mill in England that had not been built with gold coined out of the blood and bones of the operatives, and until their grievances were effectually redressed, there could be no settlement of the question. . . . Before children 8 years of age should be allowed to go into the factory for the purpose of unnatural and killing labour, before they should cross the threshold of a mill to be murdered, the door-posts should come down ! . . .

The amendment to Baines' motion was carried by a very large majority.⁹⁵

This victory, however, was followed by reverses. On 20 November Bradford crowds attacking the Guardians' meeting were charged by hussars ; the authorities seriously feared that Oastler was planning an armed invasion of the town. A fortnight later the Guardians decided to implement the Act, in a Union cowed by special constables, Metropolitan police, infantry and dragoon guards. An odd assortment of Bradfordians, including Addison, Bull, Bussey, Heap, Morgan, Joshua and George Pollard, Wood and Balme, held a protest meeting on 13 December. But Thompson had deserted the cause, and Oastler could only sneer at Power and 'a few canting, base, bloody and brutal Whigs'.⁹⁶ In January, amid further riots, Huddersfield opposition also fell.

The closing stages of the campaign were marked by torrents of almost revolutionary oratory from Oastler and Stephens. Both supported the Glasgow spinners' leaders, for whose defence the Manchester spinners raised over £200, in the mistaken belief that the case resembled Tolpuddle. At Glasgow Stephens ferociously aroused Radical passions : ⁹⁷

If they will not reform this, aye, uproot it all, they shall have the revolution they so much dread. We shall destroy their abodes of guilt, which they have reared to violate all law and God's Book . . . we shall warp in one awful sheet of devouring flame, which

no arm can resist, the manufactories of the cotton tyrants and the places of those who raised them by rapine and murder. . . .

The horrified Whig judge Henry Cockburn could not understand 'why these direct interferences with a pending trial were allowed, or have not been punished'.⁹⁸ At a Manchester meeting to help the Glasgow men, Oastler again 'unfurled the royal banner of innocence — the standard of the Ten Hours Bill', and bitterly attacked 'the bloody Whigs'.⁹⁹

Oastler and Stephens aroused angry audiences throughout the North and were fully reported in O'Connor's new *Northern Star*, which was printed by one Ten Hours veteran, Hobson, and edited by another, Hill. Factory chimneys, proclaimed Stephens, were 'cemented with women's and children's blood'. Two days after Christmas Oastler told a great Huddersfield crowd that 'he could not conceive how any man who called himself a member of the Church of England could obey' the 'false' Poor Law; if the Crown failed to guarantee men's 'right to liberty and subsistence', all Authority crumbled and 'had no constitutional claim to allegiance'.¹⁰⁰ At another December meeting he declared,

Down with the Church and down with the State, if they shall combine to oppress the labourers, whom God says are the first that shall be fed. . . . They have endeavoured to rule and failed. Now let the people make laws for themselves, and see what they will do.

He still explained local conditions to Thornhill, courageously refusing to aid the Act which his employer supported.¹⁰¹

Stephens spoke in similar style, contrasting Brougham's sinecures and pensions with the workhouse allowances. Like Oastler, he claimed to follow the Tudor 'Christian socialism' of Bishop Latimer; and he adopted Oastler's methods of propounding it.¹⁰² On New Year's Day he delivered his most famous speech, to a vast Newcastle audience, roaring that,

Sooner than wife and husband, father and son should be sundered and dungeoned, and fed on 'skillee', sooner than wife and daughter should wear prison dress. . . . Newcastle ought to be and should be one blaze of fire, with only one way to put it out, and that with the blood of all who supported this abominable measure.

He was 'a revolutionist by fire, by blood, to the knife, to the death' against the Poor Law. When all legal means had failed, it should be opposed by force :

then it would be law for every man to have his firelock, cutlass, sword, pistols or pike, and for every woman to have her pair of scissors, and for every child to have its paper of pins and box of needles, and let every man, with a torch in one hand and a dagger in the other, put to death any and all who attempted to sever man and wife.

The threat of violence was constantly repeated : 'If all fails, then the firebrand . . . The palace shall be in flames. . . .' ¹⁰³

Parliament had 'betrayed and robbed them of their inheritance', Oastler told Dewsbury workers ; he still wanted 'an extensive improvement in the condition of the working classes'. ¹⁰⁴ On 8 January 1838 O'Connor, Beaumont, Dr. John Taylor and Sharman Crawford addressed a Leeds universal suffrage meeting. The crazy young Beaumont advocated hanging all the party leaders, and when Crawford protested, replied with wild talk of 'taking a sledge-hammer and knocking out the tax-gatherer's brains'. ¹⁰⁵ He died eighteen days later, completely deranged.

The Factory Movement had travelled a long way towards sedition and revolution by the start of 1838. John Edward Taylor, proprietor of the *Manchester Guardian*, told Thomson of 'the dreadfully violent language . . . [and] diabolical incitements' of Oastler's group, and urged the Government to send an agent to 'take down at least any particularly objectionable passages'. ¹⁰⁶ A new and dangerous era was opening.

CHARTISM AND REACTION

THE anti-Poor Law agitation had a strange assortment of allies. Prominent among them was Stanhope, who told Oastler that 'his old friend' Eldon

never mentions to me the new Poor Law without the utmost indignation and abhorrence.

Stanhope considered Eldon's death 'an irreparable loss to the cause', recalling his attacks on 'the most infamous law' and his belief that 'if Parliament would not do its duty, the People must do theirs'.¹ But opposition was also strong. One John Easby, published an attack on Stephens, a man

totally destitute of every attribute which adorns the Christian, or sheds lustre o'er the character of man . . . a base mercenary . . . a compound of public fraud, falsehood, treachery, duplicity, and ingratitude . . . ignorant and contemptible . . . the greatest buffoon in or about Ashton . . . the Jack Cade of the nineteenth century . . . his Satanic Majesty's chaplain . . . [and] a veritable profligate, who had committed every act of outrage and indecency under the hypocritical cloak of a divine.

Stephens was, in short, 'exulting in depravity, wallowing in debauchery [and] glorying in the vilest strains of indecency'; and every employer of a Stephensite risked murder. Easby defended Hindley, the masters and Liberals, attacked Stephens' tavern meetings and admitted that the whole fantastic catalogue was provoked by an attack on his father.² Place also condemned Stephens as 'a malignant crazy man, never exhausted with bawling atrocious matter', though admitting that 'he was obeyed, almost adored, by thousands'. While supporting land nationalisation, Place remained a Malthusian supporter of the New Poor Law.³

A novel Tory-Radicalism guided much of the campaign. Oastler explained in the *Northern Star* that he supported the Monarchy, aristocracy and Church : ⁴

I have no wish to see society disorganised [and] the Government and People pitched into bloody array against each other. . . . But if the Church, Throne and Aristocracy are determined to rob the poor man of his liberty . . . then they are worse than useless. Then, with their bitterest foes, would I cry, *Down with them, Down with them all to the ground.*

He opposed the Poor Law as an Anglican, asking, 'Shall the Bible be forgotten, because Malthus has written a book?' He remained 'an old-fashioned Tory, an ultra Tory, a Tory without expediency'; the Whigs opposed Stephens simply because he was ⁵

a most eloquent opponent of the New Poor Law, a most able defender of the constitutional rights of the people and a most fearless and undaunted opponent of Whiggery.

Oastler strongly supported the 'national altar' of the Establishment, before the Huddersfield Tories.⁶ But he militantly condemned the Government's 'crawling, dirty, bludgeon, shabby career' to the South Lancashire Association, in February:

If they thought the inhabitants of these hills and valleys would tamely submit to be cheated against law out of their rights, they might expect, for he knew they would meet with, sudden death on the part of their own friends.

'Before I would submit to such an Act', he declared at Rochdale,

I would set the whole Kingdom in a blaze. I am no incendiary, but I have affection in my heart, and will breathe out.

'The law of devils . . . ought to be resisted to the death', declared Stephens:

If the law were established, it should be eye for eye, tooth for tooth, wife for wife, child for child, man for man, blood for blood.

And at Rochdale he insisted that

If it were right to confiscate the property of the people by abrogating the 43rd of Elizabeth, it was right for the poor to take a dagger in one hand and a torch in the other, and do their best for themselves.

Stephens was now O'Connor's 'pride, boast, glory and Radical'.⁷

For some time *The Times* had advocated united national

resistance to the Law, and on 19 February 1838 a Central Association was formed in the Freemasons Tavern, with Stanhope as chairman, Fielden as vice-chairman and Walter as treasurer. Opponents ascribed Walter's hostility to personal antipathy towards Chadwick, a former employee — a story 'more monstrous than any of Mr. Chadwick's fictions', to the *Manchester Advertiser*.⁸ Manchester delegates sent Oastler, Stephens, Bull, O'Connor, Condry and John Cobbett to make a final appeal at Westminster. And Huddersfield still opposed the Act. Swaine's Liberals forced the nomination of a secretary on 29 January, but for the Board elections on 25 March the Tories and Radicals issued a comprehensive address against 'the three-headed monster of Somerset House' and its 'cruel, illegal and unconstitutional' law.⁹ All such activities were reported in O'Connor's phenomenally successful *Star*, which linked the Poor Law and suffrage agitations; in March and April it serialised Stephens' biography of Oastler, 'the Father of the Poor, the Defender of the Oppressed and the Dread of the Tyrant'. Now the North's greatest paper, it countered Liberal protests at its violence by reprinting Brougham's Reform speeches and picturing Baines hissing the Queen.¹⁰ But the panacea of universal suffrage was gaining immense popularity; until it was achieved, Benjamin Rushton told Halifax Radicals in January, 'the aristocracy would continue to rob them' — while with the vote they would obtain 'all that they wanted'.¹¹

I

While the North fought the Poor Law, various Radical causes were promoted. In Parliament George Grote's almost successful annual motion for the Ballot was matched by C. P. Villiers' Free Trade proposals. Lord Francis Egerton, the Tory Member for South Lancashire, professed to see the '*commencement du fin*' in the 'fatal' division, but Grote himself now felt that 'sustaining Whig conservatism against Tory conservatism' was 'not at all worth while'.¹² Howick and Brougham defended the Poor Law, in Commons and Lords. 'Though mistaken, violent [and] hardly of sound mind . . . [on] the Poor Law', Brougham thought Oastler 'at heart, an exceedingly humane and benevolent man'; but

it was difficult to believe that any being in human form could utter such sentiments, in such language,

as the 'gross misrepresentations . . . blasphemy . . . [and] abominable profanity' of Stephens.¹³

As London Radicals celebrated the Tolpuddle men's return in April, their 'missionaries' roused Wales and Scotland to feverish excitement. The Birmingham Political Union organised a women's rally to support its National Petition and condemn the Corn Law and Poor Law. And Huddersfield reformers still fought on. Illegally defeated at the Guardians' meeting on 9 April, they prevented progress a week later, with the support of a mob. On 7 May a crowd of thousands, under Stephens and O'Connor, took control of the meeting, which Tory Guardians again adjourned; six Guardians were subsequently charged with 'tumultuous assembly'.¹⁴ Roused by Earl Fitzwilliam's description of the 1834 Act as 'only a step towards no Poor Law at all', Bull petitioned the Lords in May, against the 'unconstitutional, anti-monarchical', unchristian law, asked for a return to 'the real and benevolent principles' of Tudor legislation and gave evidence before both Houses.¹⁵ Stephens also remained active. 'He would never rest until the Poor Law was erased from the Statute Book', he told Bradford demonstrators. At Saddleworth in June, he declared that ¹⁶

there was no hope of anything being done for them, unless they resorted to physical force, and the only question was, when should they commence burning and destroying mills.

But he still claimed to be a Tory constitutionalist. Fielden also wished to conserve 'old English institutions'; but he closed his mills while the operatives broke up the Todmorden Guardians' meetings.¹⁷

On 28 May, prompted by Frankland Lewis, Thornhill summarily dismissed Oastler, after eighteen years' service.¹⁸ But though ill, Oastler continued to write for the *Star*, which started a testimonial fund, supported by the Fieldens, Duncombe, Pitkeithley, Whitacre, John Wood, Wythen Baxter of Hereford, William and Charles Walker, Brook and Stocks.¹⁹ 'He has divided you', Oastler told the Tories,

and sunk you and made you ashamed of your name — and that is all Peel has done for the very party which worships him,

Speaking at the Halifax theatre on 28 July with O'Connor, he urged fervent workmen to

have a brace of horse pistols, a good sword, a musket. . . . It is the right of every man to have them. *They* will petition for you.

After all constitutional appeals had failed, he hoped that violent threats would prevail. 'Arm then', he wrote in the *Northern Liberator*, 'arm for peace, arm for justice, arm for the rights of all'. Five days after he gave the same advice at Dewsbury on 1 August, a mob attacked local Guardians.²⁰ Keighley was also disturbed when its Union was formed in July.

But the new Radicalism spread. On 8 May the London men produced their People's Charter, and six days later the National Petition was presented at a mammoth Birmingham rally. Birmingham delegates gained the support of M'Nish and the Glasgow spinners, and *en route* home, one of them, John Collins, toured Yorkshire and Lancashire and met Stephens. On 5 June O'Connor's Great Northern Union supported the Petition, and in July, while Birmingham Radicals planned a Convention, Dewsbury workers adopted the Charter. The two suffrage movements were gradually fused, but London and Birmingham soon lost control, as Chartist enthusiasm spread through the North. Yet again, Oastler's movement crumbled.

II

In the North, the Chartist agitation was largely a continuation of Oastler's organisation. Although Tory politicians refused support, many, including Disraeli, were sympathetic. And certainly O'Connor, now the 'Apostle of the North', hoped for the support of Oastler and Stephens, the leading orators of the factory districts.

As Tory reformers, Oastler and Stephens had no interest in universal suffrage *per se*. 'I would not give two straws for household suffrage or universal suffrage', declared Stephens, 'unless [it] brought peace and plenty to the cottage'. He supported Chartism for economic and social reforms, but regularly denounced its political 'humbug', although he continued to advocate arming against the 'New Poor Law Bastilles'.

Stalybridge employers blacklisted his supporters. In Stephens what Cobden called 'the unholy alliance of Tory and Radical' was carried to its extreme limit.²¹ But to Oastler, Chartism appeared largely as another stupid Radical obstacle to urgent reforms. He supported arming 'to roll back the stumbling block of innovation and restore the Constitution'. Universal suffrage he had constantly condemned, and he never hid his contempt for the Birmingham Radicals. But he still maintained close contacts with Hanson, Hobson and Pitkeithley, who now preached socialism and Chartism.²² And he understood as well as anyone the motives and background of Northern Chartism.

On 25 August Oastler left Fixby, accompanied by ten bands and some 15,000 supporters, wearing party favours and the new Testimonial medal. Presentations were made before a vast Huddersfield crowd, and Oastler broke down during his speech of thanks. During the following months the ailing 'Factory King' moved to several places, before settling at Rhyl in the autumn.²³ But in organising the farewell demonstration, Leech and Joseph Thornton had contrasted the honour of 'the Man of the People' with 'the shafts of malice thrown by an aristocratic absentee landlord'. Thornhill angrily blamed Oastler and accused him of taking estate money. Consequently, Oastler retained the Fixby accounts, to disprove the charge. The fact that he still owed Thornhill substantial sums made his position highly embarrassing.²⁴

But despite Tory appeals, Oastler's articles continued to advocate arming. His Poor Law agitation collapsed as the Chartist organisation incorporated its societies, and O'Connor assumed the Northern leadership. Oastler left his mark on Chartism in the textile areas, but he did not guide it. When Place wrote of 'the schism . . . commenced by Stephens, O'Connor and Oastler', he only demonstrated his ignorance of Northern history.²⁵ Stephens retained his place for some time, and under him and O'Connor Northern Chartism was basically 'economic'. O'Connor regularly attacked Free Trade and the Southern moderates; but Stephens best expressed their mood, in a famous speech to an enormous rally on Kersal Moor, under Fielden, on 24 September. 'Chartism is no political movement, where the main question is getting the ballot', he proclaimed:

This question of universal suffrage is a knife and fork question, after all, a bread and cheese question . . . and if any man should ask me what I mean by universal suffrage, I should reply, that every working man . . . [should have] no more work than is necessary to keep him in good health, and so much wages as should keep him in plenty and afford him the enjoyment of all the blessings of life which a reasonable man could desire. . . .

The Chartists followed the factory reformers into the Primitive Methodist chapels, crowded Anglican churches and held Sunday meetings to read Stephens' sermons; and later, they evolved their own 'Christian Chartist' creeds.²⁶

While Stephens addressed the Manchester operatives, a liberal group formed the Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association. They had been advised on 10 September by Dr. John Bowring, but were principally organised by Archibald Prentice, the editor of the *Manchester Times*. Next day, Ebenezer Elliot, who was 'for the Charter, but not for being starved to death first', linked Chartism with Free Trade, at Sheffield.²⁷ But in general, the cleavage between 'liberal Radicals' and factory reformers was maintained by the Chartists. In October the free traders' provisional committee included Elkanah Armitage, John Bright, George Wilson, Thomas Potter, George Hadfield, J. B. Smith, Richard Cobden, Henry Marsland and Jeremiah Garnett. In the following January the Association's Council included such names as Ashworth, Greg and Hoole.²⁸ To the factory reformers their enemies' Free Trade agitation could only be explained by a desire to reduce wages. Consequently, a large section of Chartism was strongly Protectionist. "'Cheap Bread", they cry', warned John Mason, in 1840, 'but they mean Low Wages'.²⁹

Stephens preached his old doctrines. 'What care I about universal suffrage?' he asked at Wigan: ³⁰

I don't care two straws about the question: I never did think about it. I am arrayed on the side of Right against Wrong. . . .

But he continued to advise arming, on the authority of 'the law books and God's Book'. On 15 October, at a great rally at Peep Green, he claimed that there were 5000 armed men in his district. While his supporters threatened violence against anyone giving evidence to the Home Office agents now following him, he addressed excited torchlight meetings. 'England

stands on a mine; a volcano is beneath her', he declared at Norwich, on 5 November.³¹

. . . Hitherto the people have been held in leash; they can be held back no longer. They must be slipped. . . . No government can, and no government shall exist in this country that will not repeal the new Poor Law. . . . Men of Norwich, fight with your swords, pistols, daggers, torches. Women fight with your nails and teeth. . . . Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters will war to the knife.

When the Birmingham leaders condemned such oratory, Stephens mocked them as 'old women'. 'The firelock must come first and the vote afterwards', he told a Wigan meeting. 'Universal suffrage might be a very fine thing, but as yet it was all in the moon, and they must have a long pike with a hook at the end to pull it down.'³² O'Connor voiced similar, though vaguer, sentiments. And Bussey urged young men not to join the Army: if 'the ruling few' lost their 'mere breathing automatons', there would be no 'starvation Corn Laws', Debt or new Poor Law.³³

Despite temporary reconciliations, Southern leaders continued to oppose the impetuous Northern orators; and when militancy spread South, many moderates left the Movement, suspecting Tory incitement. O'Connell, in particular, condemned the extremists. But *The Times* continued to support any anti-Poor Law case, while ignoring the allied suffrage agitation; when Russell, after initial tolerance, forbade torchlight meetings, it protested strongly.³⁴ Yorkshire delegates at Liversedge entirely supported Stephens and O'Connor, although Fielden's Parliamentary attempt to repeal the Poor Law received only 13 votes.

Meanwhile, Power reported 'popular excitement' at Keighley, and Huddersfield and Todmorden again rioted. And Stephens continued his fervent crusade at Hyde, Ashton, Pennington, Leigh, Rochdale and Bury. Alarmed local authorities asked for military support, and one Richard Beswick was sent to report on Stephens' speeches. When an Ashton mill was burned down on 8 December, Stephens was blamed. He spoke violently there next day, and again to North-Western audiences. But the authorities had now collected their evidence. On 27 December Stephens was arrested by Henry Goddard, a

Bow Street runner. Nervous magistrates at Worsley sent him to the Manchester New Bailey, escorted by dragoon guards along picketed roads, late at night. After two examinations Stephens was freed two days later on bail of £2000. He was committed to the assizes on 18 charges.³⁵

Chartism was now divided over the question of physical force. O'Connell's Irishmen

entirely disapproved of the language of intimidation and violence, incitements to arms, aspirations for revolution . . . [and] sanguinary ferocity of Oastler, O'Connor and Stephens. . . .

Place also opposed Stephens — and Vincent and O'Brien — both of whom he considered partly insane.³⁶ Attacks on the Northern leaders mounted in the Chartist Press.

Much of the argument arose over a confusion of purpose. Stanhope's anti-Poor Law movement had succeeded in deferring the abolition of outdoor relief, but entire repeal appeared remote, except through a gigantic organisation, which the suffrage reformers possessed. Thus, when the Northern groups merged with the political agitation, they retained their own aims. But Chartism originally had allies like Place and O'Connell, who supported the Poor Law. There were Chartists, too, who regarded the anti-Poor Law agitation as 'nothing more than a trick of faction', a Tory ruse. On the other hand, Lytton Bulwer believed that Chartism was only a continuance of the old agitation.³⁷ In fact, Chartism was always based on uneasy alliances; and the Northern movement remained primarily a social protest. 'The people at large', wrote Stephens, nearly ten years later,

know little and care still less about the Charter . . . [but] the social condition of the people is truly appalling.

O'Connor had much the same view. 'Call Chartism by what name you will', he declared, 'its principles have sprung from the infant blood of English children . . .'. The Charter was simply 'a means of ensuring a fair day's wages for a fair day's work'.³⁸ Russell understood Chartist motives: ³⁹

Few care for universal suffrage, vote by ballot or annual Parliaments. The greater part feel the hardship of their social condition. They complain of their hard toil and insufficient wages, and

imagine that Mr. Oastler and Mr. Fielden will lead them to a happy valley, where their labour will be light and their wages high.

III

Stephens' arrest was the first direct Government action against the Chartists. Charles Greville thought that ⁴⁰

there was no case against him sufficient for a conviction. The magistrates completely lost their heads and . . . blundered and bothered their proceedings miserably, so as to afford an ultimate triumph to this mischievous fellow and his followers.

But O'Connor instantly deserted Stephens, while Oastler organised a defence fund through the North and Midlands, raising well over £1000. Hetherington's new *Charter* opposed Stephens, although one contributor, Thomas Dunning the bookbinder, agreed with his distrust of the free traders.⁴¹

O'Connor's supporters also condemned Free Trade, broke up Manchester meetings and passed their own amendments to liberals' resolutions. At Bright's Rochdale rally on 2 February, the Chartists carried a declaration that

the present Corn Law agitation is made up for the purpose of diverting the minds of the people from the only remedy of all political grievances.

Urged on by O'Brien, Manchester, Bradford, Huddersfield, Birmingham and other towns followed.⁴² This policy was long continued after the formation of the Anti-Corn Law League in March.

But the Convention which met on 4 February soon showed that Northern violence was not popular everywhere, as Pitkeithley personally discovered while addressing apathetic London audiences. Factory reformers present included J. P. Cobbett (who soon resigned), Bussey, Cleave, John Deegan of Hyde, Fletcher, Hetherington, Richard Marsden of Preston, James Mills of Oldham, Dr. P. M. MacDouall representing Ashton, R. J. Richardson, O'Connor, Pitkeithley, Rider and Stephens (who made a brief visit). Membership fell after fatuous and sometimes revolutionary debates and much discussion on a General Strike, which the Convention was in no

position to organise; and a rump moved to Birmingham in May. But the Northern agitation remained virile, with old William Benbow preaching revolt 'like a mad thing'. Mac-Douall's violence led to his arrest on 22 April, and others followed him, although the sympathetic Sir Charles Napier of Northern Command thought that 'insurrections were produced by bad government'; he observed that 'Funk was the order of the day' among magistrates.⁴³

Resistance to the Poor Law was now crumbling, but was not entirely dead. The Rev. John Hart of Middleton preached against the Act in Stephens' Charlestown chapel. At Nottingham Oastler still advised workers to have arms, to add force to their petitions; and he told property owners that ⁴⁴

The whole social system is on the brink of ruin. . . . You cannot subdue the people. Justice will pacify them. It is yours to grant; they are waiting to receive. . . .

'Secure to honest labour its reward, and political discontent and agitation will melt as snow before the sun', asserted Bull, who continued to attack the Poor Law and the poor's intemperance.⁴⁵ Terrifying indictments of the Act and details of particular cases continued to appear.⁴⁶ But Huddersfield, the bastion of resistance, was now under Liberal control, after the trial of the 'Oastlerite' Guardians, and Ashton and Bradford were patrolled by special constables.⁴⁷ Oastler's organisation had been swallowed by the Chartist giant.

IV

Through the months before his trial, Stephens explained his unique Toryism. In his first sermon after his release, he declared that ⁴⁸

unless a priest of the living God be a politician in the pulpit, he has no business there at all. Law and Religion can never be separated. . . .

The world was struggling against God; and if the Poor Law continued, the Throne and Constitution, 'must, would and ought to perish'. Russell was denounced as a 'cold-blooded hard-hearted murderer . . . one of the chiefest arch-fiends let loose from the political pit of Hell'.⁴⁹ Stephens' speeches

brought fame to an anonymous *Book of Murder*, which purported to be an official guide 'on the possibility of limiting populousness' by infanticide. He apparently accepted this 'Malthusian' satire as authentic, and convinced many Chartists that the Whigs, in addition to separating the sexes in the work-houses, planned to use gas-chambers or biological operations.⁵⁰

A series of Stephens' sermons published under the title of *The Political Pulpit* had wide popularity. 'We want in England Christian Reformers', he told Hyde supporters. 'There has already been too much . . . Political Reform.' He caused 'great surprise' at Stalybridge by declaring that Hell was peopled not by mistaken sectarians, but by 'those who kept bread from the hungry, refused to clothe the naked and did not visit the sick. Christ said so.' In Ashton market square he condemned hypocritical 'Christian' employers and the 'damnable, infernally damnable and ever-to-be-damned Poor Law', and urged ministers to condemn industrial overworking.⁵¹ These politico-religious addresses were read in many Chartist gatherings in the North and Midlands.

His trial being postponed, Stephens visited London in May. He appeared at the Convention, and at a Radical meeting in the 'Crown and Anchor' again advocated arming — not for political reform, but 'against the factory system . . . child-working and mother-working . . . and the Poor Law system'. On 12 May he addressed three large meetings. 'He hated revolution', he declared at Islington, for it was 'sinful in the sight of God, unless there was just cause for it'. But he doubted whether underpaid and overworked operatives owed allegiance to a neglectful Government. Society was 'divided into two unequal classes, the rich oppressor and the poor oppressed', he told Primrose Hill crowds, urging continued opposition to the Poor Law. He 'honoured the Queen, but feared God more', and would never obey an Act 'opposed to the Law of God'.⁵²

Dogged by police agents, Stephens returned North to deliver his final sermons. He demanded the destruction of Parliament, Crown and Church, unless 'the upright poor man [received] comfortable maintenance'; he 'didn't care about the Charter . . . a republic . . . the Monarchy . . . [or] the present order of things or any future order', unless they guaranteed 'a full, sufficient and comfortable maintenance,

according to the will and commandment of God'. He exhorted local detachments of troops not to repress workers' movements. And in an Ashton farewell sermon he answered accusations that he had changed his politics. 'He never was, and, by the help of God, never would be a Radical'; he had consistently opposed the Petition and General Strike —

he had a great deal of nonsense to answer for, but he had not that rubbish on his hands. That was Attwood's humbug, not his.

Indeed, most of the Chartist 'rigmarole' was 'not worth fighting for'; Stephens had 'only held the point of Universal Suffrage in a certain sense and with certain limitations'.⁵³ Disappointed Chartists thought this address a *volte-face*. In fact, it followed Stephens' consistent belief in the supreme need for social reform, which alone justified physical action: 'it was the right of Englishmen to be well-armed'.⁵⁴

On 15 August Stephens was tried at the Chester Assizes before Mr. Justice Patteson, for addressing

an unlawful meeting at Hyde . . . seditiously and tumultuously met together by torchlight and with fire arms, disturbing the public peace.

The Attorney-General, Sir John Campbell, was the prosecutor and Stephens defended himself, claiming that he had defended the constitutional rights of the poor against the Whigs. He had never been a Paineite: 'instead of removing institutions, [the people] should amend them', and,

so far from the people (as the party to which the Attorney-General belonged asserted) being the source of all political power, he had maintained, out of the Word of God, that all power was of God. . . .

He recalled the Whigs' violence of 1831 and denied supporting the Chartist 'rigmarole':

It is because 5 years ago I took up the question of the . . . factory labourers . . . and the Poor Law Amendment Act that I stand before you today. It is only in connection with these two questions that I have had anything to do in public.

Patteson praised Stephens' 'fluency and power of language', which 'he had very seldom seen equalled'.⁵⁵

The neighbourhood had been picketed by the Cheshire Yeomanry and special constables, in case of attempts at rescue. But some Chartists were angered at Stephens' denial of their cause. Thomas Dunning of Nantwich declared that 'Chartists felt no further sympathy for him' — and ⁵⁶

many felt pleased that he got a heavier sentence than Dr MacDouall, who defended his Chartist principles in a speech second only to that of Robert Emmett.

While Baron Gurney sentenced MacDouall to one year's imprisonment, Stephens received 18 months at Knutsford, later changed to Chester Castle. His Ashton friends disagreed with Dunning; they assaulted local constables and boycotted the shops of prosecution witnesses. The Northern agitation now became increasingly political. Place recorded, with some chronological error, but ultimate truth, that Stephens ⁵⁷

had been used to address the people and to dogmatise as he pleased, had learned how to lead them at will. . . . Before he took the active part in political meetings, O'Connor was the general, the great mob orator; but Stephens soon became the superior in certain places containing a large number of people. He was now their idol, to whom they bowed down, and had he desired to become the great leader of the working people of the North and used but ordinary discretion, O'Connor would soon have been cast into the shade. A Government prosecution took him out of the field and left O'Connor the sole and unopposed master of it.

V

When Attwood's National Petition was rejected by Parliament on 12 July,⁵⁸ the Chartist Movement was split between Poor Law and suffrage reformers. After riots and arrests, the remnants of the Convention returned to London, hopelessly advocating General Strikes, which Napier thought 'egregious folly'. Skilled unionists constantly opposed such schemes, which were supported only by the impoverished Welsh miners and ironworkers and the Northern extremists, who rioted under their motto of 'Peacefully if we can, Forcibly if we must'. Throughout the industrial areas Napier found ⁵⁹

a stern look of discontent, of hatred to all who are rich, a total absence of merry faces: a sallow tinge and dirty skins tell of suffering and brooding over change. . . . Poor fellows.

Thomas Carlyle mocked the Poor Law and diagnosed Chartism as simply 'bitter discontent grown fierce and mad'. J. C. Symons had not believed that 'so much crime, misery and disease could exist', as he found among the Glasgow slums. Chartism remained, basically, a protest against such conditions. 'Carlisle is a bad place, and always has been', Ashley noted in the summer : ⁶⁰

Handloom weavers here, as elsewhere, are the stock-in-trade for the agitators to work with.

In the most remarkable Parliamentary speech on the Petition, Disraeli 'was not ashamed to say that, however much he disapproved of the Charter, he sympathised with the Chartists'. He dated the movement from the Reform Act and Poor Law, and believed that 'the Tory Party would yet rue the day' when it supported centralisation. When Russell ascribed responsibility for the seditious threats to Oastler, Disraeli replied in 'Oastlerite' fashion : ⁶¹

The noble Lord regards the Chartists as if they were the first body of men who had appealed to physical force. He talks as if the hon. and learned Member for Dublin had never appealed to a petition signed by 50,000 fighting men.

As the arrests proceeded, the Convention closed in September. Some members had been sickened by the long, aimless debates; Fletcher, for instance, was now convinced that Chartism was an invention of Radical supporters of the Poor Law. Oastler later adopted the same explanation: Chartism had been started by Place and O'Connell to divert workers' attention.⁶² But revolutionaries still plotted, and John Frost's pathetic Monmouth rising in November had support in Birmingham and Dewsbury. To avoid complicity, O'Connor moved to Ireland, while Bussey fled to America.⁶³ The Newport failure and subsequent prosecutions led to feverish protests; Pitkeithley was active in the work, and there were riots at Sheffield, Dewsbury, Birstall and Bradford, but wholesale arrests prevented serious trouble. In January 1840 the Monmouth leaders were sentenced to death, but in February the sentence was commuted to transportation. Disraeli, who 'wished more sympathy had been shown', delivered his famous dictum that ⁶⁴

in a country so aristocratic as England, even treason, to be successful, must be patrician . . . although Jack Straw was hanged, a Lord John Straw might become a Secretary of State.

Through the spring the Chartists discussed organisational plans, and on 20 July 23 delegates formed the National Charter Association at Manchester, which included such factory reformers as Pitkeithley and James Leach of Manchester. Much energy was used against the expanding Anti-Corn Law League. No law 'passed in support of monopoly' would be repealed, until there was 'a more liberal constituency', declared Robert Wilkinson, as Halifax Chartists stormed Jonathan Akroyd's League meeting on 23 April.⁶⁵

But proletarian energies were divided. O'Connor, in prison, dreamed of his peasant proprietorship schemes; Bright roused Rochdale workers against Church rates; and the free trade agitation spread. Richard Cobbett became 'Attorney-General to the Manchester socialists', whose creed, he told Stephens, was 'a very good satire on modern philosophy and folly'.⁶⁶ Stephens maintained an attitude of surprised indignation at his sentence; but captivity was not 'so very, very frightful' to one who had slept outdoors 'within a stone's throw of the North Cape'. Another prisoner, the moderate Lovett, doubted free traders' sincerity, but optimistically believed that most Radicals⁶⁷

had resolved to give up their various hobbies of anti-poor laws, factory bills, wages protection laws, and various others.

In September Samuel Smiles, who had offered Lovett employment on his release in July, was writing of a plan to unite all Radicals.⁶⁸ That elusive ideal was defeated by the hostility of Leeds Chartists to any association with O'Connell. But the free traders held some 800 meetings during 1840 and distributed well over a million tracts. And in the following April they were powerfully reinforced by the appearance of Edward Miall's virulent *Nonconformist*, which opposed factory legislation as 'a delusive remedy'. By 1841 the scattered liberal ideas of the 'thirties were beginning to take organisational shape.

VI

Meanwhile, the Factory Movement never quite died. Even as Chartism submerged many local bodies, small groups of

reformers kept the elements of some Short Time Committees alive. And inside the Poor Law and Chartist agitations Ten Hours men constantly advocated their old policies, though never gaining much support from the Southern moderates. But generally, during the years of the first rise of Chartism, the Factory Movement was at a low ebb.

Senior's pamphlet appeared too late for any Governmental effort to modify Althorp's Act in 1837; and Liberal attempts to create a 'public demand' had been frustrated by Stephens' victory over Baines. In 1838 Manchester reformers published a cogent reply to Senior, claiming that he had been misled by visiting only the best factories and had completely underestimated profits. Nor were Greg, Ashton and Ashworth 'good' masters: two opposed any factory legislation, while one favoured a twelve hours Act, 'with a clause to exempt his mill'. Samuel Greg had been convicted 12 times in 11 months, and Robert and Rathbone had also been fined for overworking children, while Robert was notorious as the employer of 100 girl 'apprentices'. Ashworth broke the law by not asking for age certificates — but he

refused to pay the penalty imposed upon him; he wished to be considered a factory martyr, and allowed his goods to be seized.

To pay for his vaunted school, he had increased cottage rents; and Ashton's school

had answered three purposes: 1st, to show that no factory act was necessary; 2ndly, to show that the schooling part of it could not be made to work; and 3rdly, to prove that it could be made to work well.

When an Ashton surgeon indiscriminately attacked the Ten Hours agitation, Hindley, Oastler and Stephens, one William Clarke, a local operative, produced another detailed answer.⁶⁹

Following the constant violence of the Glasgow cotton spinners, a Select Committee investigated workmen's combinations. Doherty declared that his Manchester spinners had several aims, but

the main object was to prevent reductions of wages; and next . . . to procure an Act of Parliament to lessen the hours of labour in factories. . . . Our society has been abandoned at different periods and our meetings given up, but we have never abandoned

the hope and attempt to lessen the hours of labour by Act of Parliament.

To O'Connell he confirmed that he wanted 'ten hours or less'; and he told Pringle that far from deprecating legislative interference, 'they sought it'. The 'Factory Question', he told Ashley, had been the union's main interest for over twenty years.⁷⁰

Textile factory operatives totalled over 423,000 in 1838 — 259,000 in the cotton industry, some 54,000 in woollen, 31,000 in worsted, 43,000 in flax and 34,000 in silk. Of these, over 218,000 cotton, 47,000 woollen, 31,000 worsted, 33,000 silk and 16,000 flax workers were employed in England. 83 per cent of cotton workers and only 44·1 per cent of woollen workers now worked in mills.⁷¹ The industries were increasingly concentrated, and particular processes and products often continued to be localised in near-traditional areas, although the development of the 'combined' firm was tending to obscure Lancashire's regional divisions. Such specialisation caused cyclical slumps to have quite disastrous effects on particular communities. There is some correlation between Northern violence and Northern unemployment — although this is far from being the sole explanation of the politico-economic history of the industrial areas.

In 1837 the Inspectors suggested amendments to aid enforcement of the Act. After a long delay, Fox Maule and Labouchere proposed a Government Bill on 9 April 1838, principally to tighten the clause on children's ages and establish a uniform series of regulations.⁷² There was little chance of persuading the Ministry to take any wider action, but the reformers resumed activity. Ashley appealed for Christian support, quoting the Inspectors' reports on continued overworking. The Bradford men, hearing some rumour that Government planned to repeal Althorp's Act, insisted on the old policy that the only alteration should be a ten hours clause. On May Day they rallied in the Temperance Hall, to hear the Tory Charles Walker.⁷³ At Manchester Doherty published an address, mainly based on the *Standard's* report on 'the Factory Question in France', with François Delessert cast in Sadler's role against the liberal deputies.⁷⁴ And Oastler continued to reprimand apathetic aristocrats and 'snod-faced dissenters'.

The Government apparently lost interest in its proposals. Ashley moved the Second Reading on 22 June, bitterly attacking Ministers for breaking past promises to take up the matter; he planned to introduce a ten hours clause in the committee stage. Russell and Thomson defended the Government's inactivity, blaming parents and masters. But Thomson emphasised that the Government would continue to resist Ashley's proposals. Peel called for a rapid settlement of the 'perpetual blister', but agreed with Thomson's arguments. A large group in his party, however, followed Goulburn in supporting Ashley, who lost by 119 votes to 111.⁷⁵ And *The Times* commented on 'the broken faith and callous feelings of this mercenary and jobbing clique' in Government; Russell laboured under 'one of the most monstrous delusions that mortal men ever created for himself'.⁷⁶

In the same month, J. A. Roebuck visited a Glasgow cotton mill, finding 'a sight that froze his blood':⁷⁷

The place was full of women, young, all of them, some large with child, and obliged to stand 12 hours each day. . . . The heat was excessive in some of the rooms, the stink pestiferous, and in all an atmosphere of cotton flue. I nearly fainted!

Unfortunately, this experience did not affect Roebuck's votes after he returned to Parliament in 1841. William Napier gave a similar report after a factory visit:⁷⁸

The noise of the machinery was deafening, the heat intolerable, the smells disgusting, and the haggard faces and distorted forms of the women and children employed were heart-sickening. . . . It is a hellish system.

Ashley again raised the matter on 12 July, but was 'counted out'; *The Times* condemned the Ministers' 'most harassing and discouraging trickery'.⁷⁹ But eight days later Ashley moved a resolution regretting that the 'imperfect and ineffective' Act had not been amended. He described the effects of speedier machinery in increasing children's labour, and the repeated breaches of the law:

the disreputable millowner . . . found, on casting up the account, that it was far more profitable to disobey than to observe the Act.

A major debate followed. Maule and Russell defended the Government, hoped for effective enforcement and opposed any

further interference. Brotherton spoke of 'fraud and deception' frustrating Parliament's intentions, and Fielden declared that the Act would only be enforced 'at the point of the bayonet'. But O'Connell again joined Hume in condemning the ten hours plan, and Ashley was defeated by 121 votes to 106. The Manchester reformers reprinted reports of the debate, again condemning O'Connell's desertion. The worthless Act, insisted the *Manchester Advertiser*, 'was the work of neither Tories nor Radicals. It was the unqualified and envenomed spawn of Whig policy'.⁸⁰

In October Thornhill's lawyers demanded the balance of Oastler's debt, and Oastler challenged them to claim it in court, where he could disprove his former employer's allegations. A writ was soon served, and Oastler's attempts to have the trial moved from London to Yorkshire were rejected.⁸¹ The 'Factory King' was thus removed from his kingdom; for the first time the Factory Movement was deprived of its leader. However, there were still occasional signs of vitality, especially at Bradford and Manchester. In November Matthew Balme, now secretary to the Bradford committee, preferred complaints against the overworking of local children.⁸² And Charles Dickens followed the fashionable trend of visiting Manchester: he

saw the *worst* cotton mill. And then he saw the *best*. *Ex uno disce omnes*. There was no great difference between them.

He planned to visit the 'enemy's camp' again, in January, and hoped for introductions from Ashley: ⁸³

what he had seen had disgusted and astonished him beyond all measure. He meant to strike the heaviest blow in his power for those unfortunate creatures. . . .

By January 1839, while Oastler worried over his first notice of trial, the Ministers and Inspectors were preparing another Bill. Superintendent Robert Baker reported that

factory schools were of many kinds, from the coal-hole of the engine-house to the highest grade of infant education. The engine man, the slubber, the burler, the book-keeper, the over-looker, the wife of any of these, the small shopkeeper or the next-door neighbour with 6 or 7 small children on the floor and in her lap, were by turns found teaching. . . .

Inspector Rickards had found 'a drunken ale-house keeper' acting as a medical practitioner and granting age certificates.⁸⁴ And the Act's provisions on holidays were widely ignored.

Maule introduced the Bill on 14 February. It aimed to strengthen the powers of the Inspectors and their superintendents, who were to have the right of entering any part of the mill. Only qualified medical men were to grant age certificates, and children were forbidden to work in more than one factory in any one day. Maule proposed the Second Reading two weeks later, admitting that 'the existing schooling provisions were not only inconvenient, but almost entirely useless'. Evasions under the pretence of making up lost time were now to be prevented. Ashley expressed his support, and no delegates or petitions were sent by either side.⁸⁵

After the February debate, the Bill was postponed. But interest had been aroused. During February and March, Fanny Trollope and her eldest son, Thomas Adolphus, toured the factory areas, with Ashley's introductions to Doherty, William Walker and Reuben Bullock of Macclesfield. Mother and son were shocked by the 'horrors of uncivilised savagery and hopeless abject misery' which they found. Thomas described Doherty as 'an Irishman, a Roman Catholic and a furious Radical, but a *very* clever man'. At Wood's house they met Bull, who now 'had very little hope of legislative interference' and gloomily talked of the possibility of arson and revolution. With Doherty they heard Stephens preach at Stalybridge. But Oastler was 'perhaps the most remarkable individual' whom Tom Trollope could recall, nearly half a century later: ⁸⁶

He was the Danton of the movement . . . he had a commanding presence, and he was withal a picturesque, if it be not more accurate to say a statuesque, figure. . . . [He was] the very *beau-ideal* of a mob orator . . . an advocate whom few platform orators would have cared to meet as an adversary.

Mrs. Trollope's investigations were more productive than Dickens', and her novel, *Michael Armstrong*, appeared in 12 parts during 1839 and 1840, based on Oastler's papers and her own enquiries.

Oastler received a second notice of trial in June, and was waiting in Brompton for Thornhill to proceed.⁸⁷ On 1 and 6

July Maule's Bill was discussed again. There was strong opposition to the extension of inspection from such old enemies as Patten and Philips, while Russell and Thomson defended the Bill. Noting that the total penalties exacted in 1838 were £8300, Brotherton tried to extend legislation to young persons to the age of 21, but was defeated. Ashley's ten hours amendment was lost by 94 votes to 62, after determined opposition from Joseph Pease, the Quaker Liberal Member for South Durham; but he succeeded in including silk mills and lace factories, by 55 votes to 49. Constant discussions followed between Government, Inspectors and a deputation of mill-owners. As no agreement was reached and Ashley refused to yield, early on 27 July Russell withdrew the Bill.⁸⁸ The disappointed Inspectors⁸⁹

earnestly hoped that these great improvements might be brought forward in a Bill early in the next Session of Parliament.

The inconclusive debates provoked the usual reactions. During the Easter vacation, Baines organised a meeting in the Leeds court-house, when an 11 hours motion was unanimously adopted: local reformers were immersed in Chartism. 'Mr. Baines always supported this term of 11 hours a day', his son rather inaccurately wrote, twelve years later: 'he opposed the 10 hours as a dangerous restriction'.⁹⁰ But Manchester reformers told Parliament that they 'had appealed . . . until they were in a state of despondency, bordering almost upon despair', and that

by the Act of 1833, every point that had been gained by the Acts of the late Sir R. Peel and those of Sir J. C. Hobhouse had been lost [and] that the law had been relaxed . . . until it had become a standing joke. . . .

They demanded an end to Government's 'interminable delays, perpetual shuffling and procrastination', more stringent penal clauses, the prohibition of millowning justices acting on factory cases, the extension of the superintendents' powers and the strict interpretation of the masters' responsibility. The Act at present, they declared, was 'an Act to enrich unprincipled Millowners by allowing them to overwork and torture unprotected children with impunity'.⁹¹ One old opponent was

removed in the summer, when Thomson was appointed Governor-General of Canada. But in September Greg held the Manchester seat with a reduced majority, against the Tory Sir George Murray, and joined his brother-in-law, Philips.

In December Thornhill sent and withdrew a third notice of Oastler's trial. After balancing the estate books, Oastler had found that his debt still totalled £2137:6:8½d. A fourth notice arrived in January, and Oastler complained of the long delay, which prevented him from earning a living.⁹² He was still writing, however, and was a regular contributor to *Stephens' Monthly Magazine*, a disordered journal which Stephens edited from his cell. 'The time for slumber is gone by', Oastler told the Home Secretary, the Marquess of Normanby: the Poor Law had had a fair trial and had failed, despite ⁹³

the inhuman conduct of boards of guardians throughout the land, backing the nobles in their oppression of the poor.

There were still spasmodic riots, especially at Keighley and Todmorden. Hoole himself, as chairman of the Salford board, pointed out that the Act 'would not have received the sanction of a Public Meeting' and if fully applied would have caused serious trouble. The Chorlton Guardians, however, thought that although ⁹⁴

no part of the . . . Act had excited more clamour than the vesting powers so great in the Poor Law Commissioners, yet in practice this was found to be exceedingly beneficial.

Reformers still hoped to restore local autonomy.

In January 1840, as the French Chamber of Peers debated a Factory Bill, there seemed little chance of major legislation in Britain; Chartism dominated the scene. When Oastler supported Walter in a bitter Southwark by-election, there were loud Whig protests. During the debate on Sir John Yarde-Buller's motion of no confidence, Sir George Grey talked of 'an unhallowed alliance between Tories, Chartists and Destructives', and asked whether 'it was not a notorious fact that . . . the champion of Conservatism invited and received the aid of the incendiary Oastler' at Southwark. When William Duncombe objected, Grey 'left Mr. Oastler to the protection of his

party' — which Peel refused to give. Oastler had followed a 'wicked' course, declared the Conservative leader; but

how could a Cabinet Minister, who advocated the principles of agitation, involve Oastler in the consequences of that agitation. . . .

Oastler reacted more strongly. 'Any clown can call names', he told Grey, 'but an unprivileged lout thus offending is more like a gentleman than one of your privileged order.' Maule next took up the attack, telling the House that

Threats of fire and daggers were held out by the notorious Oastler in agitating against the Poor Law Amendment Act.

And Russell informed Peel that

there had been two different sorts of disturbers — one set violently and intemperately proposing the repeal of the New Poor Law, with Mr. Oastler at its head; and another set seeking universal suffrage.

Oastler replied characteristically, and when Melbourne himself told the Lords that Oastler was 'resisting all lawful authority', he reminded the Premier of Baines' violent speeches against the Monarchy itself.⁹⁵ The Whigs gained little from their attacks.

Oastler continued to write about particular instances of Poor Law cruelty: the punishment of an aged Nottingham pauper for giving him information provoked a strong protest. In a series of letters *To the People of Yorkshire* he made a further plea for factory reform.⁹⁶ And these writings were supplemented by Stephens' monthly notes. The imprisoned minister vigorously answered his critics:

That a man should openly tell the people how heartily he hated the ballot and all such sneaking, cowardly, new-fangled 'reforms' of our old English hold-up-the-head institutions, and yet be a favourite with them, was too much for a 'five-point' Radical to endure. So Stephens must be denounced, and he was denounced accordingly.

He remained a social reformer, opposed to 'the awful delusions of the National Convention'.⁹⁷ Interspersed with such political contributions were Stephens' poems, translated hymns and

'pastoral letters'. Answering Whig allegations, he asserted that,⁹⁸

If to have foretold events be to have occasioned them, then I plead guilty to the 'insurrection' in Wales. I have said over and over again that 'the revolution had begun'. It is going on. It will and must go on. Nothing can stop it now.

Stephens saw the final outcome of the refusal to legislate on the factory question to be the violence and threats of 1839 and 1840.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SECOND REVIVAL

ON 3 March 1840 Ashley and Hindley moved for a Select Committee on the operation of Althorp's Act. This was agreed to, and a committee was set up under Ashley; it included Fielden, Hindley, Brotherton, H. A. Aglionby, Brocklehurst, Strutt, Greg, Maule and Strickland among its 14 members. On 37 days between 11 March and 14 July, it examined 26 witnesses — the Inspectors and 7 superintendents, 7 masters, 4 medical practitioners, 1 manager and 3 operatives. The evidence was published in six reports, totalling 914 pages.¹ More than half of the material consisted of valuable information from the Inspectors on the working of the 1833 Act. Henry Ashworth was searchingly questioned about the migration scheme; he reluctantly admitted that he paid agricultural workers less than local weavers, and claimed that 'it was utterly impossible for any man to observe the Factory Act and mind his own business'. He confessed that children were working illegal hours in his mills. Lawton and Dunn spoke for the Ten Hours Bill. A spinner for thirty years but now a shopkeeper, Lawton claimed that most spinners favoured 'Ten Hours' — even, he told Hindley, if the change involved wage cuts. He told of victimisation and fines and of the Manchester committee's attempt to enforce the law by reporting local breaches; but the group had now ceased to meet. Dunn, a former secretary of the Glasgow committee, asserted that reformers were often able to obtain more details of factory conditions than were the Inspectors.²

Evidence was given against the making-up of lost time — an allowance 'productive of the grossest violations', according to Horner; it was impossible for the Inspectors to check. There were also difficulties about children's meal-times, as, by bad draftsmanship, the Act had only specified such breaks for young persons. Horner also insisted that parents often

encouraged illegal child labour and that much of the factory education was purely nominal.³ Every aspect of the Act was considered, and the Inspectors appealed for urgent amendment.⁴

Meanwhile, Stephens continued to attack Political Unions and Radical politicians, and published the autobiography of a parish apprentice, as a reminder of earlier conditions. In June the magistrates banned his writings, but an Ashton committee continued his *Magazine*. One T. Higgins condemned the 'worthless, shrinking cowardice' of the imprisoned O'Connor; but while opposing 'reckless and insane projects', Stephens 'bore no ill will against Mr. O'Connor, or anyone else who had basely and treacherously attacked him'. He was now planning a *People's Journal* to continue his campaigns.⁵

Disraeli shared much of Oastler and Stephens' philosophy. He opposed the Chartists' harsh sentences and regularly attacked the Poor Law; Maule had called him 'an advocate of riot and confusion'. Disraeli told the Commons that

the aristocracy were the natural leaders of the people, for the aristocracy and the labouring population formed the nation.

He agreed with Charles Attwood, a leader of Northumbrian Tory-Radicalism,

that an union between the Conservative party and the Radical masses offers the only means by which we can preserve the Empire.

And Disraeli shared Northern suspicions of the free trade agitation. 'Whose interest was it to have the Corn Laws repealed?' he asked the Commons in 1838. 'It was the interest solely of the manufacturing capitalist. . . .'⁶

Oastler's long wait ended in the summer. He received a fifth notice of trial on 5 July, and five days later appeared before Chief Justice Tindal in the Court of Common Pleas. Thornhill's counsel, Fitzroy Kelly, withdrew all imputations of defalcation, whereupon Oastler admitted to owing £2600, counter-claiming £500 salary. The matter was thus settled amicably, with the help of Oastler's solicitors, Richard Cobbett and George Faithfull. Oastler's name was cleared, but he had still to arrange settlement, and waited in Chelsea to hear from Thornhill.⁷

On 4 August Ashley moved for an enquiry into 'the employment of the children of the poorer classes in mines and collieries, and in the various branches of trade and manufacture' not covered by Althorp's Act. Brotherton seconded him, and again the House agreed. A Royal Commission was issued in October, with Tooke, Southwood Smith, Horner and Saunders as Central Commissioners. Horner's views had now changed considerably. In July he told Hugh Tremenhare that ⁸

he had not met six millowners who expressed any sympathy with, or regard for the improvement of the labouring classes in their employ!

And he published a lengthy pamphlet on child employment. He considered that the Factory Act's failures

have mainly arisen from defects in the law itself; not in the principles it lays down, but in the machinery which was constructed. . . .

Passed in haste, 'it was in some degree legislating in the dark', and

much of it was found to have been ill contrived, and some positively so bad that it obstructed, and to a great degree prevented, the attainment of the object.

He now believed that

too much weight was attached to [the millowners'] broad assertions — much more than the parties themselves would now claim for them. . . . They spoke with the confident tones of superior knowledge and experience, used technical terms, unintelligible and therefore having a somewhat mystical import to those they were addressing . . . the inspectors were appealed to by the Government, and they stated that the assertions had been so often and so confidently made to them that they could not venture to set up their own opinions and their then limited experience in opposition to them.

The moral was that

it would be of great importance to look with a jealous eye upon all proposed changes of phrases, and even of single words, by interested parties.

Horner considered that Maule's Bill would have 'remedied nearly the whole of these defects, although . . . not all of

them, nor in the best way'. He believed that 'there never was any sound reason for the exemptions *in favour of silk millowners*, and there was none now'. Legislation should defend the children's interests, not the masters' :

And Parliament must tell the masters that they must accommodate themselves the best way they can to the conditions upon which alone the State will allow them to purchase infant labour. . . .

With half-day relays, the age limitation might be altered, 'for no child of 8 . . . would get any harm by working half a day in a factory, especially in the afternoon'. Horner described foreign factory legislation, in order to 'forward this most just and humane and, therefore, most wise and politic object'. He believed that

the interposition of the Legislature in behalf of children was justified by the most cold and severe principles of political economy ; and the alleged interference with parental authority by such legislation was a mere sophism.

The national wealth depended upon a healthy, moral and intelligent population.⁹

I

Ashley's activity was not supported by any Northern revival during 1840 ; Chartism, like Owenism before it, had drained working-class energies. In 1840 the position of the Factory Movement was, indeed, more critical than in 1833. Oastler was 'in his third year of unprofitable and expensive wandering and legal proceedings', and in November Thornhill demanded settlement. Oastler offered to pay from any future salary, but Thornhill demanded security, although he had already ruined Oastler's credit. On 1 December Oastler replied that he possessed nothing and would give himself up. Eight days later, an officer escorted the 'Factory King' to the Fleet debtors' prison.¹⁰ Stephens was already languishing in Chester Castle. And in September Bull left his Bradford parish of S. James, after a controversy between John Wood, the patron, and Dr. Scoresby, the vicar of Bradford, over surplice fees, which ended in Wood closing the church. The occasion was marked by testimonials from parishioners, including Addison, Balme

and Charles Walker, and from clergy such as William Heald of Birstall, Morgan of Bradford, H. J. Bailey of Drighlington, Brontë of Haworth and Boddington; William Bull, the curate of Sowerby, who had once opposed factory reform, now praised his brother's work. The Sunday scholars presented a 'time piece', and Bull sadly moved to a new slum parish in Birmingham, expecting his usual 'hard work and scanty wages'.¹¹ Wood had already left Bradford, to become a country squire, with 3000 acres at Thedden Grange in Hampshire.

In December Ashley contributed a paper on 'Infant Labour' to the *Quarterly Review*, urging Parliament to ¹²

protect those for whom neither wealth, nor station, nor age have raised a bulwark against tyranny; but above all, open your treasury, erect churches, send forth ministers of religion. . . .

And soon after entering prison, Oastler announced that he would publish a weekly magazine. Such old allies as the *Leeds Intelligencer*, the *Northern Star* and *Halifax Guardian* supported him; and the *Planet*, which 'differed altogether from him in politics', hoped 'that he was destined to discover that humanity in England could find not only thousands of admirers but millions of supporters . . .'.¹³ Oastler's *Fleet Papers* first appeared on 2 January 1841, dedicated to Thornhill. Weekly, for over three years, they provided a vehicle for Oastler's extrovert writing, and thus became a valuable source for the Movement's history. Despite the organisational collapse, the Movement's causes were now gaining very wide publicity. The Reports of the Handloom Weavers Commission revealed the extent of one social tragedy: Commissioner Hickson reported that cotton handloom weaving

was carried on in circumstances more prejudicial to health and at greater sacrifice of personal comfort than weaving in any other branch.

John Robertson, the Manchester surgeon, described the unhealthy, crowded slums of his town to a Select Committee on the Health of Towns. One-eighth of the rateable property at Bolton was untenanted in 1839, and 10,000 were unable to pay rates in 1840.¹⁴ The 'condition of England question' was now being widely discussed.

The Anti-Corn Law League followed the Factory Movement's example in reprinting reports on bad industrial conditions, ascribing them to agricultural Protection. The factory reformers, however, continued to oppose their old enemies who ran the League. When Smiles' *Leeds Times*, once a 'Ten Hours' supporter, became a League paper, the Leeds reformers protested against the power of 'Free Traders' Gold' and warned Yorkshire operatives against the journal, asserting,¹⁵

The Ten Hours Bill contains the *principle* that LABOUR NEEDS PROTECTION. The old Poor Law of Elizabeth contains the principle that THE POOR HAVE A RIGHT TO BE FIRST KEPT BY THE LAND. The establishment of these principles will form a *ground-work* for the working men — to work upwards to that comfortable and plenteous condition which is theirs by right, by reason and by justice.

II

Early in 1841 there were signs of a revival of the Movement, in preparation for the inevitable renewal of Parliamentary discussion. On 10 January the Bingley committee was re-established by Charles Walker, Rand, Balme and William Busfield Ferrand, who had added his mother's surname as her heir to the largest local estate. Old Bradford reformers held the first of many meetings to raise money for Oastler's support, and Pitkeithley and Stocks organised a Huddersfield 'Oastler Festival', followed by a Ball in February and a large Bradford Festival in April, attended by 'High and Low Churchmen, Methodists, Dissenters and Socialists, and also a large number of factory youths and maidens'. Weatherhead, 'one of the best men [Oastler] knew', organised a Keighley tea-party, and Chorley and Sutton in Ashfield also held meetings.¹⁶ Oastler recorded these events and gave vigorous support to the growing Movement. He still attacked

the school miscalling itself 'Liberal, enlightened Philosophy', which faints at the thought of hanging a murderer and laughs at the slow murder of millions by its own more cruel pressure.

The Church 'must be restored to its pristine purity, and consequently utility . . .', 'centralisation must be entirely uprooted and the local authorities must be restored to their

original vigour'.¹⁷ Such sentiments, and the story of his old campaigns, were brought before a widening public: the circulation of the *Fleet Papers* grew rapidly and they were reviewed and quoted very widely in the Metropolitan and country Press.

At the start of a new year's labour, Ashley regretted that his work for the Children's Employment Commission had 'received no support, or next to none' from the clergy, except Bickersteth and Sir Henry Montagu. But in the North, Anglican priests were again active. Such old supporters as Boddington, Morgan and Heald were aided by important newcomers. Among them was James Bardsley, curate of Burnley, a former Oldham child worker who had served as curate to Brontë and Bull, and later became a noted Temperance leader. Dr. William Scoresby, vicar of Bradford from 1839, a scientific writer and controversialist, had worked with the Northern whaling fleets. And, at Leeds, from 1837 the great Walter Farquhar Hook was vicar, energetically extending the Church's influence and interested in all local affairs. Oastler welcomed this quickening of clerical interest, and assailed Roman Catholic and Protestant opponents, especially the negro emancipationists, now 'our most savage opponents'.¹⁸

Another supporter was George Calvert Holland, an eccentric physician who conducted social investigations among the poorer inhabitants of Sheffield. In February he started a series of pamphlets addressed to James Garth Marshall, the managing partner of the Leeds and Shrewsbury flax firm and a recent critic of the Corn Laws. 'Do you not, as a class, feel that you have done gross injustice to the hard-wrought artisan', Holland asked the hard, intolerant, *nouveaux-riches* 'millocrats'; the typical millowner was 'a leveller, that is, to level all above himself'. Holland bitterly regretted that 'the few, arrogant from wealth and ignorant of everything but its power, were the arbiters of [the nation's] destiny', for

One of the evils inherent in the accumulation of wealth is that it is not necessarily associated with intelligence. . . .

Marshall had claimed that the interests of the classes were identical; but, said Holland, the Marshalls' rise coincided with their workers' decline: 'the advocate of the rights of millions [had] grossly violated the rights of common humanity'. The

revolutionary creeds of proletarian Radicals were aimed not against the aristocracy but the manufacturers; the worker was hurt not by the Corn Laws but by 'the system by which he is cheapened'. Holland's series was widely welcomed. 'Every working man in the Kingdom ought to read it', declared *The Times*, while the *Shropshire Conservative* contrasted 'that humane man' Oastler with Marshall's 'humbug professions and protestations'.¹⁹

The *Liverpool Mail* was another strong sympathiser: ²⁰

To live at enmity with the masses is downright infatuation. . . .
The poorest person that lives within or without the walls of a
workhouse has feelings like other men. . . .

Whatever the Parliamentary Conservative Party might say, a great body of Tory opinion in the country was resolutely hostile to the 1834 Poor Law. William Brock, rector of Bishop's Waltham, expressed anger at the Conservative support for the Act:

I *know* that the poor have not right and never *can* have it, under the operation of the Poor Law Amendment Act, as it now stands.

A Tory-Radical group, including Fielden and Disraeli, opposed the extension of the Act, in February. The *Stockport Advertiser* found 142 'Whigs' and 58 Conservatives in the Ministerial lobby, and 35 Conservatives and 19 'Whigs' in the minority. 'We can account for the Whig support of it', the editor commented,²¹

because it is one of those heartless, centralising, commissioner-making jobs which a genuine Whig delights in; but we cannot see the reason why such men as Sir Robert Peel and the bulk of the Conservatives, men with whom we agree on every other subject, should do so . . . nineteen-twentieths of the respectable portion of the rate-payers are decidedly opposed to it.

Oastler naturally shared these sentiments, warning

the Aristocrats that only while they respected the rights of others could they expect their own to be maintained. If they persisted in robbing the poor, they must expect retaliation and revenge.

He remained a Tory of the extreme Right, firmly opposed to the new empirical Tamworth Conservatism. From the Fleet he resoundingly explained: ²²

A Tory is one who, believing that the institutions of this country are calculated, as they were intended, to secure the prosperity and happiness of every class of society, wishes to maintain them in their original beauty, simplicity and integrity. He is tenacious of the rights of all, but most of the poor and needy, because they require the shelter of the constitution and the laws more than the other classes. A Tory is a staunch friend of Order, for the sake of Liberty; and, knowing that all our institutions are founded upon Christianity, he is of course a Christian, believing with S. Paul that each order of society is mutually dependent upon the others for peace and prosperity. . . . I never changed my name, I never saw any charm in the word 'Conservative'. I am still an old-fashioned ultra-Tory.

This ideal was explained in practical terms. As 'a true Tory', Oastler opposed Roman Catholic Emancipation, Reform and the Poor Law — and the Peelite Conservatism, under which 'principle was deemed folly'. The cause of recent disturbances was simply that the people were hungry :

What they want is Bread, 'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work'. Nor can any true English-hearted Tory deny their right. . . .

Into the pages of the *Fleet Papers* poured the rich streams of Oastler's traditionalism. 'Only think, Sir', he wrote to Thornhill, 'of that insect Chadwick becoming, as he is, under the New Poor Law, the lawgiver to all our Nobles!' ²³

Oastler's cell became a busy place. It was crowded with friends and became almost a shrine for pilgrimages by sections of London Society. A Leeds visitor found a politician, a peer's son, two Polish counts, several editors and authors and a French Royalist exile being entertained.²⁴ Among regular visitors were William Dodd, the ever-loyal William Duncombe, Robert Hall, William Osburn, Joseph Habergam and Fitzroy Kelly, formerly Thornhill's counsel. From his cell, 'the Old King' watched and commented on every political move and encouraged the slowly reviving Factory Movement.

III

Early in 1841 Ashley was busy with the Report of his Committee on the Factory Act, whose work was progressing well. 'I have the Government with me and the millowners against

me', he recorded. 'This is a curious revolution of parties.' But he worried lest the Peers might support the masters:

The very qualities that make the Peers bulwarks against mischief render them also slow to impressions of good.

The Committee's recommendations were presented to the Commons on 18 February. 'To God above be all glory!' wrote Ashley. '. . . Considering the nature of the Committee, its objects and members, we have been wonderfully harmonious.' But he was now concerned that Melbourne's crumbling Government might fall: ²⁵

I desire above all things to carry my Factory Bill, and sure I am ('tell it not in Gath') that I have got more, and may get more, from the Whigs than I shall ever get from my own friends.

Ashley's Report made some important recommendations to ensure 'the fulfilment of the intention of the existing law': nightwork should be abolished for all under 21, the much-abused 'making-up' clauses should be modified and definite meal-breaks for children should be provided. The Committee also advocated a half-time system of 7 hours for children under 13, to be worked in either the morning or afternoon, with part of the free time devoted to education. But the problem of providing schools was evaded, with pious hopes about 'the rapid progress of the prevailing feeling in favour of a moral and religious education of the operative classes'. Henceforth, age certificates should only be issued by officially appointed surgeons, or at least attested by a magistrate; and the 1831 ban on millowners adjudging mill cases should be revived and definite penalties listed for particular offences. In addition, there should be more definite provision of holidays, a national code of regulations, severe penalties for cleaning moving machinery and an expanded Inspectorate. The Committee further recommended that legislation should be passed for children in silk mills (restricted only to 10 hours) and lace mills (hitherto completely unrestricted).²⁶

The Government moved with unaccustomed speed, and Maule presented a 77-clause Bill, framed by the Inspectors, on 26 March. It followed the Committee's advice, limiting young persons under 21 to 12 hours and children under 13 to 7 hours, with 2½ hours' schooling, for which up to 3d. weekly could be

deducted from wages. 'Making-up' time was severely restricted, and meal-breaks were provided. An Inspector-General was to be appointed, with a larger and more powerful staff; and the recommendations on age certificates were adopted.²⁷ Four days later, after a debate on the Poor Law, which Fielden, Colonel Sibthorp and Lord Granville Somerset all opposed, Maule introduced a Bill on silk mills. Here children were restricted to 10 hours, with no educational provisions apart from tests of Bible reading and, at 13, of writing and arithmetic.²⁸ Conditions in the silk industry were bad — and in lace factories worse — but the need for many children and the difficulties of legislating for very small establishments long hindered reform.

These proposals aroused Northern interest. When Bradford millowners considered the Bills, under Scoresby's chairmanship, William Walker and Jowett carried a 'Ten Hours' resolution, and Scoresby, amid 'great cheers', called for a 5½ hours' day for children. Dodd petitioned 'the Nobility, Gentry and Clergy' and, with Fielden and Ashley's financial backing, published his terrible autobiography; in 27 years' work he had earned an average of 8s. 3d. weekly and been completely crippled. Now, at 37, Dodd was a one-armed, unemployed pauper.²⁹

But Maule's Bills were again dropped. The Government was nearing its end. On 4 May Ashley sadly recorded,

Horner writes me word that the Factory Bill is suspended indefinitely; the state of affairs is assigned as a plea . . . and thus another year is added to the period over which wrong and violence are to reign without control!

In April Walter had won a Nottingham by-election, with Chartist aid, to Oastler's delight: 'it was a triumph of Christianity over Infidelity!' Melbourne told the Queen that he was not surprised at the result, but thought such alliances very serious; Russell felt that this danger should prevent a dissolution.³⁰ But the Ministry was defeated over the Corn Laws, and on 4 June a 'no confidence' motion was carried by a single vote, and a General Election followed.

IV

Chartism had meanwhile started to revive. Leach's Association quickened its growth early in 1841. But other groups pursued

independent paths. Scotland now had a separate movement; Lovett's London moderates planned 'educational' bodies; 'Christian Chartism' was entrenched in the Midlands; Vincent preached 'Temperance Chartism'; and Thomas Cooper led the Leicester 'Shakespearian Chartists'. Leach's N.C.A. was the most important body, and fully shared the Factory Movement's hostility to free trade liberalism. 'Why do these liberal manufacturers bawl so lustily for the repeal of the Corn Laws?' asked a Manchester poster. 'Because, with the reduced price of corn, they will be enabled to reduce the wages of the working men. . . .' Ferrand made the same accusation at Bingley: Free Trade would ruin agriculture, reduce wages, create unemployment and lead to famine in time of war.³¹

Over the Poor Law also sections of the Tories and Chartists were agreed. Wythen Baxter's famous *Book of Bastilles* was supported by such a varied company as the Duke of Newcastle, Stanhope, Exeter, Kenyon, Duncombe, Colonel Lowther, General Johnson, Fitzroy Kelly, Ormsby Gore, Disraeli, Sharman Crawford, Walter, Oastler, D. W. Harvey, Bowen, Roberts, Perceval, R. J. Richardson, Hill, Pitkeithley, General Napier, Stephens, Mrs. Trollope, Bull, Maberley, Blakey and Oastler's 'dear friend', the Rev. J. D. Schomberg. It was a compendium of case-histories and attacks on the 1834 Act: 'had there been no New Poor Law, the name of Chartist would never have been heard . . .'.³²

Oastler worked ceaselessly to cement the Tory-Chartist alliance, constantly denouncing the Liberal 'spirit of the age':

It is one and the same spirit which insults royalty, deludes and defames the aristocracy, degrades the clergy, robs and oppresses the working classes and insults women!

To him, the Poor Law was 'only *one* branch of the Factory System, *intended* to drive the agricultural poor into the Factories'; and he still hoped that the Landed Interest would take the lead against it. He urged all 'honest Tories, Whigs and Chartists' to unite against the Act; if it continued, Protection was doomed:

Manufacture and commerce are both very well in their places; but the well-being of England depends upon the prosperity of her agriculture first, and then, as a consequence, her manufactures will prosper.

But Oastler thought that

there was no difference between Russell and Peel . . . neither . . . had the courage to resist the march of free trade principles.

He welcomed every sign of working-class hostility to Free Trade, but the great question was whether the landowners would awaken.³³

The Poor Law remained an election topic, and Mott still had difficulties in ordering the West Riding Unions. 'If the Commissioners were to listen to kind-hearted people', he told the Halifax Guardians, in April, 'the Law would never be carried into effect.' John Stuart-Wortley and many other Tory candidates criticised the Act and 'wholly disapproved' of the workhouse 'test'. At a Leeds meeting, with Ferrand and Beckett Denison and his brother William Beckett, he condemned the 'humbug of free trade'; they asserted that Free Trade would reduce wages and that the Poor Law 'must be altered'. The *Leeds Intelligencer* stoutly supported these views:

the New Poor Law in principle, and in many of its details, was an abomination, a violation of the inalienable rights of the poor, a disgrace to the name of England.

It promised that 'the Conservatives generally would join the enemies of the New Poor Law'; and the Government's 'cry of Corn Laws would be overwhelmingly met by the Conservatives — ay, and by the masses, with "Down with the New Poor Law"'.³⁴

There thus seemed to be real hope of wide Tory-Radical fusion. From York Castle O'Connor advised his followers to support Tory candidates against the Whigs. O'Brien protested at such counsel, but it was widely followed.³⁵ Leeds Tories asked Ashley to become their candidate, with William Beckett, the banker brother of the former Member. Ashley preferred to retain his Dorset seat, but his brother-in-law, Lord Jocelyn, accepted the offer. In June Ashley wrote,³⁶

It astonishes me to see what I have done. The operatives have been enabled in many places (and they never were so before) to tell their own story. This has been sufficient to baffle the Corn Law Leaguers. I cannot but admire and love these poor fellows. . . .

He overestimated his own part in creating the Tory-proletarian alliance, but it was fast becoming a reality.

A considerable number of pamphlets argued over Free Trade, especially on its effects on wages. Both sides professed concern over working-class distress. Baines' last Parliamentary speech described unemployment and destitution in Leeds. Northern weavers were again said to be starving. Canon Richard Parkinson produced another shocking report on Manchester conditions. A new textile depression was developing: 4000 families received parochial aid in Leeds, and 30 out of 50 Bolton mills were closed or on 'short-time'.³⁷ It was amid these conditions that the election took place in the North.

V

The elections resulted in substantial Tory gains. The Poor Law was made a major subject in many divisions. 'Is Salford to be the pocket borough of the base, bloody and brutal Whigs . . . who passed the infernal Poor Law Bill', asked the posters of the Tory William Garnett, 'a determined opponent of the detestable WHIG POOR LAW'. But his opponent was Brotherton, a Free Trader but a factory reformer, whom the Chartists eventually supported and who won by 118 votes. At Nottingham Walter was defeated fairly easily; but, declared *The Times*, 'the cause of the poor was safe'. Although one group of Bradford Radicals doubted Conservative hostility to the Poor Law, Hardy won the show of hands, with the Chartist William Martin; at the poll, Hardy and W. Cunliffe-Lister were elected. At Leeds, Beckett headed the poll, with the Whig William Aldam second; Hume and, to Ashley's disappointment, Jocelyn, were defeated: 'thus fell all his hopes and efforts'.³⁸

Ashley himself was re-elected at Dorset, with a typically Protectionist policy against the 'cheap bread' appeals: 'let them *add* the other half of the story, Low Wages . . .'. On 12 July he recorded perhaps the greatest Tory victory:

We have triumphed in the West Riding! This is indeed marvellous work, and calls for our humblest and heartiest thanks.

Next day he called on Oastler, for the first time since 1836, considering that 'he has often been outrageous, because he

knew that his principles were just'.³⁹ Oastler saw in the Riding result proof that 'Yorkshiremen were not Fitzwilliam's serfs'; Stuart-Wortley headed the poll, with Beckett Denison second and Lords Milton and Morpeth 700 votes behind. 'Tyranny, Infidelity, Popery and Humbug have now lost their power in Yorkshire', proclaimed Oastler, rejoicing at the Becketts' election: 'somehow, he liked that breed'. The Whigs had lost through 'their entire ignorance of the character of the working classes'; but Peel shared their ignorance. As 'an old-fashioned Tory', Oastler hoped that a Conservative Government would end the 1834 Poor Law.⁴⁰

Most Chartist candidates withdrew, advising their followers to vote Tory. Pitkeithley and G. J. Harney were 'hustings' candidates in the West Riding, Leach and James Williams at Leeds, and David Urquhart, the Russophobe 'Tory Chartist', contested Sheffield. 'The Radical and Chartist votes were courted wherever there was a contest by the Tories, to whom these votes were almost invariably given', commented Cockburn. 'We wish the Chartists joy of the exchange they have made!' wrote the *Bradford Observer*, sourly: 'they have been chiefly instrumental in throwing out Mr. Busfield . . .'. And the shocked *Morning Chronicle* confirmed that 'the Chartists, such as are voters, have almost to a man supported the Tories'.⁴¹

The results were very heartening for the factory reformers. Lord Francis Egerton, the Tory inheritor of the Bridgewater fortunes, was unopposed in South Lancashire, balancing Patten, re-elected in the North. Hindley held Ashton. John Hornby, an Anglican Tory manufacturer who had maintained his handloom weavers' wages during the depression, was narrowly elected at Blackburn. The sympathetic Liberal Peter Ainsworth was returned for Bolton, with the hostile Dr. Bowring. Another Liberal sympathiser, the iron-founder Richard Walker, held Bury. The Tories Lord Sandon and Grimsditch retained their Liverpool and Macclesfield seats, and the Radicals Johnson and Fielden were unopposed at Oldham. Preston returned the Whig reformer Sir George Strickland, and the Radical Crawford won Rochdale. William Duncombe and Edward Stillingfleet Cayley, a Whig Protectionist, had no contest in the North Riding. The Tories Monckton Milnes and Lord Pollington won Pontefract. And at Knaresborough a new Tory Member

was elected, who was to play a leading part in the future agitation. At 32 Ferrand was already noted in Yorkshire for his blistering attacks on all forms of Whiggery. He ⁴²

declared himself to be a Tory, or, in other words, a determined supporter of our glorious Constitution . . . a conserver of all that was good in our institutions and a destroyer of all that was bad.

The arrival of this thoroughgoing 'Oastlerite' at Westminster was a major event in the history of the Factory Movement.

VI

After the elections the Conservatives had a majority of 78. Parliament met on 24 August, and the Melbourne Government, defeated by 64 votes, resigned six days later. Peel became Prime Minister of a Conservative Ministry.

The great mystery was over the Government's social policy. Oastler was uneasy. 'Somehow, I do not like the casting of this new Conservative administration', he wrote in September:

I fear there is something rotten, out of joint, and ricketty about it. . . . I am not altogether without my fears that [it] will only be a cotton-twist affair, after all.

Weekly he condemned Free Trade and urged the Short Time Committees to revive. When Graham supported the Poor Law, Oastler protested that 'the people were sick of Whiggery [and] would not endure it even under the name of Conservatism'. Graham, indeed, soon became the prime object of Oastler's attacks: ⁴³

In Sir James Graham was incorporated the very essence of the soul of 'liberal principles'. . . . It was . . . clear that [he] must be thrown overboard, or that the Conservative vessel would sink.

Ashley was also worried; he hastened to inform the Government of his views and hopes, but privately considered that 'the country had no real confidence in Peel . . .'.⁴⁴

In July and August Ashley toured the North for the first time, meeting the veterans of the committees and the Oastler Societies, the personnel of which was largely the same. The

Movement was growing again, in the hope of obtaining the Government's support. Northern leaders regularly visited Oastler, and the committees raised money for him. Auty, Balme and Clarkson of Bradford, Bedford and Firth of Keighley, Huddersfield and Dewsbury delegations and Walter and Kelly visited Thornhill, to ask for Oastler's release; but Thornhill insisted on security.⁴⁵ Ashley's visit gave him important information. At Manchester he addressed 80 operatives in the Red Lion Inn, with Jowett and Benjamin Sadler. 'The clergy here, as usual, are cowed by capital and power', he noted, while rejoicing at support elsewhere from Sparks Byers and Archdeacon Wilberforce. On successive days he visited Bolton, Ashton, Huddersfield — where he met local masters and 200 operatives — and, on 5 August, Leeds, where Hobson, Benjamin Sadler, Jowett, George Fleming, Rider, Perring, Auty, William Walker and Mark Crabtree (once doorkeeper to the Chartist Convention and now Bull's successor as the Riding secretary) joined him. Visits to Bradford, Dewsbury and other towns were postponed, but the short tour left an abiding impression on Ashley. 'Success went on increasing, and each reception was more hearty and affectionate than the last', he recorded: 'what a sin it is to be ignorant of the sterling value and merit of these poor men!' He returned to London sure of Northern support and having told Crabtree that ⁴⁶

I will never place myself in any situation where I shall not be as free as air to do everything that I may believe conducive to the happiness, comfort and welfare of that portion of the working classes who have so long and confidently entrusted to me the care of their hopes and interests.

The Bradford reformers soon faced a new test, when Cunliffe-Lister's death caused a by-election. Ferrand's uncle, Busfeild, was opposed by the Tory William Wilberforce, son of the emancipationist and brother of the 'Puseyite' Archdeacon of the East Riding. Balme's committee approached both candidates, finding Wilberforce the more sympathetic. The Chartists again supported the Tory, and Wilberforce won the show of hands. But after a bitter contest and some rioting, Busfeild had a majority of 4 votes. 'Mr. Busfeild is the member for bludgeoning, not the member for Bradford', the *Intelligencer* sourly claimed: ⁴⁷

He is the representative of the baseness, bloodiness and brutality of Whiggery; and he narrowly escaped being also the representative of Whig murder.

Meanwhile, Ashley's activities had roused the suspicions of the Manchester cotton masters. 'Fresh difficulties beset my path', he wrote: ⁴⁸

The master spinners have held a meeting in Manchester and have resolved to oppose *any* Bill that I can bring in. This determines much of my course. I knew what *I* should do before; I can now guess what *Peel* will do; he will succumb to the capitalists and reject my Factory Bill. No human power, therefore, shall induce me to accept office. . . .

Three days later, Peel offered Ashley a junior post, which he refused. When Peel renewed the offer, declaring that the factory issue needed long consideration, Ashley 'told him that the question was not a novel one [and] had frequently been debated . . .'; he refused a Household post, unless the Government promised its support.⁴⁹ The operatives were kept informed. As Peel's 'opinions on the factory question were not matured', Ashley told Crabtree, 'I declined the acceptance of any place, under circumstances which would impede, or even limit, my full and free action . . .'. He still hoped, however, that the Government might be sympathetic. Ashley wrote similarly to Turner in Lancashire. But despite cautioning Crabtree against despair, Ashley was far from hopeful. The Bradford committee sent thanks for his efforts, and he told them to persevere.⁵⁰ Within days, Peel twice renewed his offer, and again Ashley refused. He considered that his letter to Crabtree had been 'very successful':

It has had in Bradford a soothing effect, it has abated the fall without saving Peel's popularity — he will never be a popular Minister.

But Ashley's position was delicate, and the outlook seemed dark: ⁵¹

This is a melancholy issue with which to begin a Government after 10 years of opposition: we break down in a day the favour and popularity we have been slowly accumulating during many years, and it can never be fully and freely recovered. . . .

VII

The new Parliament opened at a time of widespread distress, which was publicised by both Protectionists and Free Traders. Yorkshire woollen wages were falling and unemployment was rising. Between 1838 and late 1841, 29 woollen, 10 cloth-finishing, 18 flax, 16 engineering, 16 woolstapling and 9 stuff and worsted firms had failed at Leeds. Holmfirth weavers' and Bradford woolcombers' wages had fallen by 40 per cent, engineers' by 45 per cent and spinners' by 30 per cent, since 1833; and over half of the handweavers were unemployed. Poor rates rose by 25 per cent in a year at Bradford; 31 worsted firms had failed there since 1837, 15 firms at Baildon and even 3 at Ripon. At Manchester, Leigh, Bolton, Rochdale, Colne, Ashton and Preston mills were closed; more than half of the Stockport masters had failed since 1836. 'When I go down to the manufacturing districts, I know that I shall be returning to a gloomy scene', Richard Cobden, the new Liberal Member for Stockport, told the Commons in September, bluntly advising Protectionists 'with a disposition to trade in humanity' to 'untax the people's bread'. Bowring talked of starvation in Bolton, where, Henry Ashworth reported, in April 1842, five-eighths of the operatives were unemployed or on 'short-time'.⁵² Life in Lancashire, amid such conditions, was like 'toasting muffins at a volcano', thought Egerton.

The election did not deter the League. In August it organised a Manchester conference of nonconformist ministers, who dutifully found the Corn Laws immoral. But O'Connor was released in the same month, full of self-confidence; already he had announced that he had led Northern workers 'single-handed and alone', since 1835. Through the following months he purged Chartism of all but his own supporters, while the N.C.A. organised support among the still numerous handweavers. O'Connor expressed their hatred of machinery, without which 'the Poor Law . . . never would have passed . . .'; machinery 'opened a fictitious, unsettled and unwholesome market for labour'.⁵³ William Cooke Taylor propagated the opposite view: 'the proper sphere for the exercise of legislative wisdom was to perfect the system, but not to check its progress'.⁵⁴

The weavers had a redoubtable Parliamentary champion in Ferrand, whose first London call had been on Oastler, who was 'delighted to see that man!' In September Ferrand frankly told Peel that 'if he did not repeal the more obnoxious clauses of the Poor Law', his Government would soon fall. He used 'terms more valuable for their blunt honesty than for their polished elegance', noted *The Times*, which 'liked plain speaking like this'. The *Chronicle* commented on the 'somewhat juvenile Boanerges, whose voice was no bad echo of the honest and manly spirit of the orator'.⁵⁵

After visiting Oastler again, on 28 September Ferrand seconded Crawford's motion to restrict the formation of new Unions, with a wide onslaught. The Act 'deprived the poor of that adequate relief and protection to which they were entitled by the constitution', and gave Liberal Members an excuse 'to button up their pockets and not to relieve the poor'. Ferrand 'identified the New Poor Law with the present disgraceful factory system'; the paupers were the masters'

worn-out, cast-off machinery, out of whose sinews they had extracted their wealth and then flung them away to die in misery and want.

Amid rising Protectionist enthusiasm, he

told those boasting cotton lords that their immense wealth had its duties, as well as its rights . . . [and] every farthing [Cobden] had obtained by the cotton trade was sprinkled with the blood of the poor factory children.

England was 'a land of slavery', roared Ferrand; men, women and children had been 'regularly picked, bought, sold and invoiced by the Poor Law Commissioners to the cotton spinners in Lancashire, there to be worked to death'. He urged Graham to alter the Act and the manufacturers to aid their workers — ⁵⁶

how could they reconcile their enormous wealth with the present dreadful distress, which they stated to exist among their own workpeople?

The motion was defeated by 131 votes to 49. But Ferrand's speech was a triumph, instantly establishing him at Westminster. The *Standard* praised his 'extremely eloquent and just denunciation'; the *Courier* thought him 'impressive and un-

answerable'; the *Chronicle* lengthily condemned his 'noisy absurdities'; and the *Globe* thought him a 'boisterous and boiling representative' of the squires in a war on industry. The *Weekly Chronicle* doubted

the extraordinary stories that Mr. Oastler and Dr. Holland's *Millocrat*, with an occasional spice of the *Northern Star*, had helped him to compile.

While the *Manchester Guardian* angrily condemned his 'unscrupulous dealing with facts', Protectionists hailed a knowledgeable new champion. 'Did not Ferrand do his duty manfully?' Oastler asked the Manchester committee: 'I thought he made a breach in the Towers of Oppression, by which my gallant Ten Hours Bill men will enter the citadel'.⁵⁷ Nearly half a century later, Baillie-Cochrane recalled,⁵⁸

the House was taken by surprise by [Ferrand's] Dantonesque appearance and stentorian voice. The great denunciator of all manufacturing wrongs, of tyranny and fraud, had at last appeared. It was a Danton, a Mirabeau, addressing the Convention — not a simple member of Parliament, fresh from the hustings. . . .

CHAPTER TEN

CONSERVATISM AND REVOLT

IN the autumn of 1841 the Factory Movement was rapidly extending once more. Ashley had rare moments of pleasure when Colonel Napier and the Rev. Henry Christmas of the *Church of England Magazine* offered their support. He sent Napier a copy of Dodd's autobiography. 'Every day brings fresh stories of suffering and oppression . . .', Ashley recorded in December. 'My poor cripple Dodd is a jewel, his talent and skill are unequalled; he sends me invaluable evidence' — but Dodd's letters 'infused both information and terror'. During the anti-Tractarian struggle over the Oxford chair of poetry, another ally, the Evangelical Tory Mrs. Charlotte Tonna, urged Ashley to 'bestow a little gunpowder on the Oxford gentry'; she 'used to be so rejoiced when he got angry in the House about the Factory children'.¹

William Walker and William Rand personally visited every Cabinet Minister to solicit support, and, with Stuart-Wortley, Beckett, Strickland, Hardy, Hindley and Fielden, invited Northern Members and constituents to a discussion in the British Hotel in London, for two days. Bright came up from Rochdale to oppose further legislation, and the meeting, under Stuart-Wortley, ultimately favoured an 11 hours compromise. But the Ten Hours men refused to change their policy, and a Bradford meeting thanked Walker and Rand for their stand.²

Operative groups soon followed. In October Lancashire delegates met Peel and other Conservative leaders, and called on Oastler, who rejoiced that³

The truth has been told by working men to Her Majesty's Ministers, [with] no Edwin Chadwick, no Muggeridge, intervening to mar their tale, or to suppress their evidence. . . .

From Yorkshire came Hobson, Leech, Crabtree, Fleming and Titus Brooke, aided by Beckett. After meeting Peel on 28 October, they considered that he

was fully aware of the great sources of our evils at the present moment, and that he sincerely sympathised with the working classes. . . .

But Graham 'urged most of the reasons adduced by the free trade polity' and

seems to us to have drank [*sic*] too deeply at the fount of the Malthusian policy to be able to get rid entirely of its influence.

Next day Wharnccliffe agreed with their statements from his own knowledge, while Gladstone expressed interest in the educational and moral aspects and the ending of female labour; both stated 'many truly benevolent and enlightened opinions'. On 30 October Beckett introduced the reformers to the eccentric Protectionist Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, who had already met the Lancashire men and was 'with them entirely'. Lyndhurst, whom they met two days later, promised to consider their case, while Stanley's views were disappointingly close to Graham's.⁴

The committee delegates' visits were remarkable examples of Tory-Radical collaboration. Though opposed to Beckett's politics, wrote the Yorkshire men, 'it gratified them exceedingly to find him so superior to class, party and conventional influence'; his principles

would speedily terminate the acrimony and division now so prevalent between the wealthy and the poorer classes. . . .

Oastler warmly supported the visits, and hoped that the Government would act on the complaints. He still gave warnings of the League's mounting activities, and offered to organise brigades of operatives to attend every Free Trade meeting during the winter.⁵

I

Meanwhile, the anti-Poor Law campaign continued. The Press regularly reported tragic cases: a Lincoln labourer committing suicide; a crippled child of 2 separated from its mother at Hampnett; a labourer dying of starvation at Donnington; an old man dreadfully neglected at Fareham. At Keighley, alleged Ferrand, elderly folk tramped up to nine miles to obtain

a 'miserable pittance' of 6d. or 1s. Napier 'knew of an old man who, being starving, was told, "Oh you can't have anything today, come again on Thursday!"' and saw a pregnant woman, with two babies, refused admission to Nottingham workhouse on a wet Christmas night.⁶ Such were the stories with which reformers sought to influence Governmental and public opinion. Wythen Baxter appealed to Peel, Graham and Wellington. But, apart from scattered meetings organised by Anglican priests and Ferrand's bitter campaign against the Keighley Board, there was now no separate anti-Poor Law agitation in being.

The new Factory Movement grew simultaneously with O'Connor's N.C.A. Indeed, the 'Fixby Compact' veterans were still closely connected with Chartism, although Pitkeithley visited America in 1842, to plan emigration schemes. Oastler remained the central figure, urging the committees to be 'unanimous, vigilant and energetic' and strongly condemning the 11 hours proposal of some Liberals and Inspector Saunders.⁷ William Atkinson, a London merchant, started a campaign to pay off Oastler's debts and secure his release. The committees and the Tory Press warmly commended the scheme: the *Standard*

could never think of Mr. Oastler's services and their reward, without a sense of shame for their party and themselves. . . .

The dying Condry paid a last tribute by reprinting an article on Oastler from the *Leipzig Gazette*.⁸

In November Walker and Rand addressed Graham, answered the points raised in their interview and claimed that

it is the bounden duty of the legislature to interfere with labour, when the oppressed parties are too weak and helpless to make proper terms for themselves, and cannot, by an appeal to their employers, obtain a remedy.

The objection that 'parents were the natural protectors of their children' would not bear examination; Walter Fletcher, Chancellor of the Diocese of Carlisle, had resigned his magistracy rather than face parents' constant requests to sign false age certificates. A 12 hours' day could not be maintained without periodic over-production; the average working day over the past seven years had been no more than 10 hours. A 10 hours'

day would stabilise markets, wages and employment and add little, if anything, to production costs — it need not involve wage reductions. 'To a Conservative Government the factory workers were looking for the redress of their wrongs, and [Walker and Rand] earnestly hoped they might not be disappointed'.⁹

The new campaign stressed the need for regulating adults' (especially women's) labour. The 12 hours' day caused gluts and distress; Ashley's Bill would share out the available work. Fielden held that it was ¹⁰

the duty of individuals to curtail the quantity of production when there was an over-abundant supply of the article they produced, rather than increase it and reduce wages.

The Yorkshire delegates insisted that 'home, its cares and its employments, was woman's true sphere', and hoped for 'the gradual withdrawal of all females from the factories'. This policy obviously had the men's personal interest, as well as moral concern, behind it; but the fact that it was now prominently displayed was apparently based on reformers' increased optimism. The old arguments were also used: Morgan regretted that 'the long time that our young people are confined in factories' prevented religious education.¹¹

Other controversies also developed. Mott's optimistic reports on Bolton pauperism provoked stormy protests. Lord John Manners, the Tory Member for Newark, who had recently toured Lancashire, advocated a revival of medieval paternalism, to aid the 'modern slaves', who faced

'work for their prime, the workhouse for their age'.

But the free traders remained active. In October Cobden hoped for 'some well-considered course of systematic agitation', with a conference to 'incense' delegates.¹² He and E. W. Watkin wanted to ally with the moderate Chartists. At a League Convention in Manchester, Joseph Sturge secured considerable support for his 'Complete Suffrage' movement, which was officially founded in January. And at Preston Joseph Livesey started his little weekly *Struggle*, to 'assist to overthrow the monstrous power of monopoly'. He denied that over-production was possible; and ¹³

the repeal of the wicked Bread Tax was emphatically the WORKING MAN'S QUESTION . . . its tendency to get up wages must be obvious to all.

The Gregs agreed: Protection, rather than overproduction, caused distress. Rathbone Greg answered Peel and the reformers by demonstrating that cotton production had increased only by $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent *per annum* in 1825-1828 and 1833-1836 and by 8 per cent in 1829-1832; since 1837 there had been a more substantial rise, but this was due to greater employment. He did not believe that under Free Trade 'wages would ever be as low in England as on the Continent'. But Conservatives continued to talk of the social effects of increasing mechanisation; to Beckett Denison, it was 'by far the most important question the Government had to deal with'.¹⁴ And Northern Chartists deliriously welcomed O'Connor's denunciation of 'Corn Law Fallacies' and 'the accursed factory system, the school of immorality, profaneness, wickedness and vice of every description'.¹⁵ But Peel's policy on the Corn Law, as on the factory question, remained shrouded in mystery. Russell considered that 'his reserve had led him into great difficulty', and predicted an insurrection by the Tory 'blockheads'.¹⁶ Many groups anxiously awaited Peel's decisions.

II

In January 1842, obviously expecting an unfavourable reply, Ashley asked

whether [Peel] had made up his mind to resist or concede the prayers of the operatives for the further limitation of the hours of labour between the ages of 13 and 21. . . .

Three days earlier he had told F. R. Bonham, the Carlton Club political agent, that the Government 'might have had with them the whole body of the operative classes', but would now drive them into the Free Trade camp; but he would continue his work, on non-party lines, and offered to resign from the Carlton, if necessary.¹⁷ Ashley did not, in fact, leave the party. But Peel was 'not prepared to pledge himself or other members of the Government', and instead, solicited Ashley's support for a Bill now being considered by Graham. This measure was, in fact, based on Maule's proposals. When Ashley enquired

whether Government would definitely oppose him, Peel declined to give a more explicit answer.¹⁸

'With the deepest regret', Ashley told the Northern reformers that Peel had 'signified his opposition to the Ten Hours Bill'; but Ashley would 'persevere unto his last hour, and so must they', using every legal method. He 'rejoiced in the sacrifice' of office, to devote his time to the amelioration of their 'moral and social condition'. Next day he gave *The Times* 'the announcement of Peel's hostility to the Factory Bill — painful enough, but it cannot be helped'. West Riding delegates, under Glendinning and Balme, considered the news sadly at Bradford, on 9 February, and thanked Ashley. *The Morning Post* claimed that he was mistaken about the Government's views and attacked his 'sanctimonious phraseology . . . the whine of Puritanism';¹⁹ but Ashley was right. Heartbreakingly, the Tory-Radicals' long efforts were now defeated by the Conservative administration.

III

Meanwhile, the Oastler Testimonial Fund had been established. Atkinson raised support at Coventry, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Leeds, Huddersfield, Sheffield, Nottingham and Leicester. The trustees were Duncombe (who had succeeded his father as the 2nd Lord Feversham, in July 1841), Sir George Sinclair, Walter, Ferrand and Fielden. The first subscription list was published on 1 January; and the flow of gifts to Oastler never slackened.²⁰

Stuart-Wortley promised support, and on 7 February asked the Government about its policy. Graham replied that he would reintroduce Maule's measure, but 'it was not intended to propose any such regulation' as Ashley's Bill. By a coincidence, Palmerston had recently told Russell that ²¹

he owned that he agreed with Ashley about his Ten Hours Bill, as far as children under a certain age were concerned.

Reformers reacted strongly to the tidings of the Government's hostility. Oastler had been issuing his usual warnings that landowners and operatives were 'in the same boat' against the League, but still hoped that Peel might act. Now, bitterly

disappointed, he angrily asked, 'Am I to be satisfied to have Whig measures adopted by a Tory Government?' ²² He thanked Stuart-Wortley and Beckett, but believed that Peel had again deceived his party, by adopting liberal ideas: the modification of the Corn Laws, announced on 3 February, was a sop to the League and

simply 15 % in favour of long black chimneys, with clouds of thick smoke, and 15 % against our corn fields and country breezes.

O'Connor's *Northern Star* started to attack the Government, and a joint Chartist and League meeting was held in Manchester. 'All Peel's affinities', thought Ashley, ²³

are towards wealth and capital. His heart is manifestly towards the millowners, his lips occasionally for the operatives. . . . Cotton is everything, man nothing!

But while League delegates visited Westminster, the Northern committees were active. On 3 January the Bradford men called on Ferrand and were 'highly satisfied' with his views; he 'assured them that his whole time and attention was devoted to the welfare of the labouring classes'. ²⁴ And Mark Crabtree, a former League collector, told the Dewsbury committee that

the success of our mission and the progress of Factory Reformation is, most assuredly, gall and wormwood to the venal panders of the griping Leaguers.

He exposed the fictitious names used on free trade petitions; the League represented the worst manufacturers, who wanted cheap corn to provide 'cheap stiffening' for inferior cloths. Crabtree praised the Government for meeting the operatives:

what a contrast was here presented to that [conduct] evinced by the Whigs! Our reception is a great eye-sore: at that the League foam with rage.

He consoled himself that at least Peel's decision disproved old taunts that the factory campaign was 'a Tory hoax'. ²⁵

At Westminster, Ferrand soon honoured his pledges. On 14 February, during the Corn Law debate, sucking oranges presented by the delighted Colonel Sibthorp, he thunderingly denounced the League 'on behalf of the Working Classes'. He alleged that Free Trade petitions included forged and com-

pulsory signatures, and attacked the Marshalls — who, far from being ruined, had amassed £2,000,000 in twenty years — Philips, Brotherton, Cobden, O'Connell and Bowring: 'the object which these League men had in view was to increase their profits by lowering the price of labour'. The Truck system was 'a system of tyranny, oppression and plunder'; League masters 'lived, moved and had their whole being for money alone'. Ferrand appealed to the Landed Interest to aid the operatives. He 'produced a sensation and made everyone enquire who and what he was', commented *The Britannia*, and *The Times* thought his speech 'ought to be a lesson to the League'.²⁶

Ten days later, during the debate on Villiers' Free Trade amendment, Ferrand answered Cobden, who had admitted that the League had 'run into collision with the masses upon some points', but claimed that Northern workers were free traders, alleged that Peel's party consisted of 'monopolists of every kind' and strongly condemned Tory 'incendiarism'.²⁷ Ferrand bluntly told Peel that 'he would never have his support, unless he thought it his duty to give it'. He alleged that the League was now seeking to arouse Chartist violence; but if the Chartists did rise, they 'would first bury their bayonets in the bosoms of those they knew to be their oppressors'. He quoted Yorkshire workmen's letters on forged petitions, and 'distinctly charged . . . those manufacturers who were members of the . . . League' with Truck and Tommy frauds: '*this* was their Free Trade system!' Ferrand then exposed such practices as stiffening inferior calicoes with flour and selling unhealthy 'Devil's Dust' and shoddy as new cloth.²⁸

This speech established Ferrand's reputation; the *Standard* thought it 'sealed [the League's] doom for ever', and *The Times* 'contemplated with unmixed satisfaction . . . the signal and utter rout of the Jacobin Anti-Corn Law League'. The *Courier* praised Ferrand's 'stinging but truthful delineation'; the *Morning Post* wrote of his 'bombshell'; the *Morning Herald* thought it 'awakening . . . refreshing, vigorous, impassioned, resolute and — unparliamentary'. Ferrand's speeches, with Peel's 'composed the marrow of the entire debate', commented *The Britannia*. But *The Scotsman* thought Ferrand's 'exhibition' was 'that of a mountebank or pantaloon

in a pantomime'; and the *Chronicle* condemned the 'frantic' Tories for the 'disgrace', and pondered over Ferrand's possible connections with Chartism.²⁹ The controversy long continued. Under constant attacks from Leaguers, Ferrand retaliated on 7 and 15 March with further charges, and began to collect evidence for a general attack on 'Truck'. The League replied in every possible way. Workmen's declarations were prepared by foremen, and Manchester manufacturers, under Bright, condemned Ferrand as 'a vile blackguard', while a Leeds clothier complained to T. S. Duncombe of his 'enormous lying'. Ferrand made a particular target of Cobden, who used both Truck and nightwork at Stockport; and he endeavoured to obtain an investigation of the Truck system. He even approached Wellington for help.³⁰

Oastler watched the Parliamentary excitement with delight. Ferrand was his ideal squire, as Thornhill had never been. When an angry Liberal claimed in the *Chronicle* that Oastler 'was Mr. Ferrand's monitor and correspondent', a Tory told *The Times* that many more M.P.s and others should accept the same lead. Oastler 'wished everybody would read [Ferrand's] speeches'.³¹ Ferrand was indeed a new force at Westminster, bringing to the Commons, for the first time, the anger and fears of the Northern factory reformers, who sent him a vast amount of evidence. One operative declared that Ferrand had not gone far enough, and urged him to attack other evils: the employment of women and children in place of men, factory fines, accidents with unfenced machinery and victimisation. He confirmed that Cobden used children on night-shifts, and hoped that Ferrand would 'go on exposing this cruel system, which he considered equal to slavery'.³² The workers also raised funds for Oastler. At a London meeting in March, a second contribution list read like a Tory-Radical roll-call, including Feversham, Ashley, Sinclair, Sir Alexander Hood, Walter, Ferrand, Schomberg, Perceval, Bowen, Matthias Attwood, Lord Northwick, Wing, Hall, Habergam, Maxwell, Kenyon, William Rashleigh, M.P., Charles Colville, M.P., Grant, Wyndham Madden and Jowett. Perring's new *Conservative Journal* supported Smithson's Leeds meeting in May.³³

But in the spring of 1842 there were many competitors for the support of the Northern working-classes. Despite Baines'

hostility, many Leaguers allied with the Complete Suffrage Union, which O'Connor and the N.C.A. condemned as middle-class 'Complete Humbug'. When the C.S.A. rallied at Birmingham on 5 April, supported by Miall, Prentice, Bright, Lovett, Richardson, Wade, Place, O'Brien and James Mills, it rejected most 'O'Connorites' but adopted the Charter's six points. Its petition, presented by Crawford, was overwhelmingly rejected by the Commons.³⁴ Bright now thought that the League 'must not touch the Suffrage question' and considered plans to coerce the Government by threatening to close the mills; but Cobden did not consider such schemes practicable. There were ideas of refusing taxes, and Prentice and others talked wildly of other possibilities. But the League lacked the determination to take a dangerous step which might not succeed. Livesey, whose halfpenny *Struggle* now sold almost 9000 copies, asked Cobden what he should tell 'the mass of the people' to do. No very definite advice came from the League's leaders; but the itinerant lecturers proclaimed violent personal gospels, and several speakers threatened lockouts. Thus, Henry Ashworth observed that 'it was now becoming a question of how long the employers could continue to carry on their business . . .' and wondered³⁵

whether the British people would continue patiently to submit to the selfish domination of a class of men who had hitherto warred against civil freedom. . . .

Against this sanctimonious threat, Ferrand's equally rousing retorts gained wide popularity with squires and operatives alike.

Various fragmentary agitations developed. Hamer Stansfield of Leeds advocated 'Compensation, not Emigration [as] the one thing needful', along with free trade. The Rev. Thomas Spencer of Hinton Charterhouse, explaining 'The People's Rights, and how to get them', wanted to abolish both Corn and Poor Laws and to introduce 'complete suffrage'. Some Leaguers flirted more closely with Chartism. But outside all these bourgeois moves, O'Connor's purged Association grew and in April held an unruly London Convention. A second Petition, allegedly signed by 3,317,702 people, was presented on 3 May by Duncombe, supported by Leader, Bowring and Fielden. But Macaulay denounced universal suffrage, and

Roebuck condemned the 'malignant and cowardly' O'Connor, and the motion was lost by 287 votes to 49. Although Northern Chartists claimed to be 'not at all disappointed', protests soon mounted, while the N.C.A.'s numerical strength diminished.³⁶

While both Free Traders and Chartists talked of violence, the Factory Movement also became increasingly disappointed with Peel. Though reluctant to oppose him, Boddington found it 'utterly impossible to support him'; his attitude to factory reform had 'grieved [Boddington] beyond measure'. Ashley, equally saddened, thought the Government 'ten times more hostile . . . than the last' and found 'the Inspectors were terrified by Sir J. Graham'; Horner and Saunders now supported reform, 'but they dare not say so'. Ashley believed that his opposition to the Tractarians had aroused further opposition; and³⁷

not a cheer was given to Peel in the House of Commons that did not retard his success, multiply his toil and add to his anxiety.

Oastler condemned Peel's new-fangled Conservatism and 'bold and desperate advance in the road to Free Trade'. He praised Ferrand's attacks on 'that corporation of Infidelity', the League; but 'it was now evident that the Conservative Government . . . [was] resolved to follow in the tyrant steps of Whiggery'. By late May³⁸

The die was cast, the mask was thrown away: the Whiggery of Conservatism was now displayed in sight of the deceived and indignant people of England.

The factory reformers had been optimistic. Crabtree had recently organised Ten Hours petitions from 156 clergy and ministers and 209 manufacturers.³⁹ The Press now gave wide publicity to factory cases and Poor Law tragedies. Balme gained the support of Buckingham, Sandys, Hardy, Lord Mahon, Wharncliffe and the Earl of March, in presenting petitions.⁴⁰ But the Government was obviously resolved not to yield to reformers' demands. Bolton was in uproar over Mott's 'unfounded statements and slanderous insinuations' and his reports, which, said Bowring, 'denied facts of public notoriety'; but Graham defended Mott in this case and in a subsequent controversy over Ferrand's Keighley Union. On 11 May Graham proposed the extension of the Poor Law for

five years. Tory journals were incensed, but the Ministry persisted.⁴¹

Consequently, in the spring of 1842 there were many groups of dissatisfied and disappointed agitators. Leaguers regretted Peel's mere relaxation of Protection; Chartists of all denominations resented the haughty rejection of their petitions; 'Oastler-ites' were angered by the refusal of major social reform. These groups were not separate entities; there remained many shades and combinations of opinions, though few free traders supported factory reform. When so many men were hostile to the Government, the ingredients of serious trouble were in existence. And when so many complaints were reinforced by deteriorating industrial conditions, angry talk of violence could easily become actual riot.

IV

As the hot summer began, anger and frustrated hope encouraged the revival of violent threats. In Parliament, Wakley, Sibthorp, Johnson, Grimsditch, Ferrand, T. S. Duncombe, Beckett, Stuart-Wortley, Denison, Hardy and Pollington failed to halt Graham's Poor Law Bill. Ferrand continued to attack Cobden and the League, and proposed a £1,000,000 grant to relieve the industrial workers; but he lost by 106 votes to 6. Oastler welcomed all these moves, and attacked the League for propagating 'treason and sedition by the hour'. Another ardent Protectionist, Dr. Willcocks Sleight, challenged the League to public debates and, with Stocks, started to propose rival motions at Free Trade meetings.⁴²

Ashley was engaged on his famous Report on mining conditions, on which he spoke movingly on 7 June:

Many men, I hear, shed tears. . . . Sir G. Grey told William Cowper that he would rather have made that speech than any he ever heard. Even Joseph Hume was touched. . . .

This success restored some of his former hopes: 'had not this carried, in fact, the Ten Hours Bill?'⁴³ But Horner, reporting on continuing evasions, pointed out that in the conditions of 1842, operatives faced 'employment on any terms, or starvation'. Stanhope advocated compensation for loss of

employment, and even Brougham wanted an enquiry into the disastrous state of industry ; but no moves were made.

In May troops put down Blackburn Chartist riots. But a month later a great rally on Enfield Moor protested at the Charter's rejection and talked of marching to London under arms. The death of Samuel Holberry, an imprisoned Sheffield Chartist, provided the opportunity for a 'martyr's' funeral and a speech by the reckless Harney.⁴⁴ But even Harney was against rash action before the organisation was perfected ; and Oastler and Ferrand constantly advised operatives against physical violence, which would only aid the League : 'if the Leaguers urge you to violence, leave that work to them !' Nevertheless, Chartist militancy mingled with the free traders' desire to embarrass the Government. Cobden talked of violent outbreaks, in the Commons on 8 July, and lesser speakers had long discussed a national lockout. The Rev. Mr. Bayley of Sheffield declared that as words did not move Parliament, force might be necessary : ⁴⁵

he had heard of a gentleman who in private company said that if a hundred persons cast lots among them, and the lot should fall on him, he would take the lot to deprive Sir Robert Peel of his life.

There was little difference in implication between the speeches of the more violent Leaguers and Chartists.

V

The famous, but still somewhat mysterious 'Plug Plots' provided the climax to the violent talk. Trouble had started in the Midlands coalfield in the spring, when strikes followed wage reductions. In July, as troops patrolled the area, the strikers gained the support of the Staffordshire and Warwickshire coal, iron and pottery workers, against falling wages and 'Truck'.⁴⁶ The strike wave was started not by the Chartists, but by economic desperation. But, despite warnings from Oastler, Hill and O'Connor against 'League treachery', the Chartists had discussed striking, in July. They were incensed at reports that League masters planned a lockout and refusal of taxes.

The strike movement was contagious, quickly spreading to Cheshire, Wales and Scotland. But the Northern affair was

set off by the threats of three 'free trade' firms and one Tory firm to reduce wages by 25 per cent. During July, after some argument, J. B. Reynier of Ashton and George Cheetham of Stalybridge withdrew the cut; but the Liberal William Bayley of Stalybridge told his men to 'go and play', on 5 August. Two days later a Mottram Moor rally decided not to return to work until the adoption of the Charter. A general strike was to be caused by sending groups to withdraw the mill boiler plugs. Touring mobs promptly closed the Ashton, Newton, Dukinfield, Stalybridge and Hyde mills on 8 August, and next day stopped most Manchester mills with surprising ease, only the Tory Birley giving opposition. The Manchester Chartists resolved to 'stay out' until the Charter passed, and other towns followed their lead.⁴⁷ The Plug-drawers moved to Oldham, Heywood, Bury, Crompton, Bolton, Rochdale, Bacup, Droylsden, Preston, Burnley, Chorley, Blackburn and Stockport. Blackburn 'presented an appearance of being in a state of siege'; five strikers were shot down at Preston; there was shooting and arson at Hanley. On 17 August a Chartist conference at Manchester, under MacDouall's influence, officially adopted the General Strike.⁴⁸

The 'Plug Plot' moved to Yorkshire. On 12 August Bacup and Rochdale mobs drew plugs at Todmorden,⁴⁹ and next day swept into Huddersfield. During the following week the mills were closed at Halifax, Bradford, Cleckheaton, Batley, Birstall, Littletown, Heckmondwike, Gomersal, Leeds, Millbridge, Dewsbury, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd, Horbury, Thornhill, Marsden, Bingley and Horton. There was a battle at Jonathan Akroyd's mills, where the rioters were routed by Lancers and the Yorkshire Hussars, under John Rand. On 25 August the strikers demanded a return to 1840 wage rates, a 10 hours' day, weekly wage payments and increased employment of men. 'Not a single mill at work!' exclaimed John Campbell, the N.C.A. secretary, to Thomas Cooper, as the Crewe train arrived in strike-bound Manchester. 'Something must come out of this, and something serious too.'⁵⁰

It was early pointed out that many free traders initially offered little resistance, though their attitude changed when the strike became almost a rebellion: Akroyd and Townend beat off the crowds attacking their mills. O'Connor soon condemned

the strike as a League plot to ruin Chartism. Although the Chartists used the strike, they widely declared that the wage cuts had been a League provocation.⁵¹ But as the affair was unplanned, there were many local variations: the Sheffield unions refused co-operation, and the Ashton men denied any political interests. This disunity, along with firm military action and the opposition of several proletarian leaders, led to the collapse of the strikes before the end of the month.

Responsibility for the 'Plot' is still difficult to apportion. The Chartists were first accused; but they had merely taken advantage of circumstances, as did Fletcher and other factory reformers. Graham suspected the Leaguers, who first abetted the trouble, but 'when it reached their own doors were the first to cry aloud for soldiers'; the workers often 'had just cause of complaint against their masters'. He told Lord Talbot that ⁵²

I am by no means prepared to use Military force to compel a reduction of wages, or to uphold a grinding system of Truck: to preserve Peace, to put down Plunder and to prevent the forced cessation of labour by intimidation — these are the sole objects of the Government.

Nevertheless, some 1500 Chartists were arrested. MacDouall fled to France, and O'Connor and 58 others were tried for conspiracy in March 1843, while many lesser men were transported or imprisoned.

Ashley decided on 18 August that

the affair . . . had now taken on the colour of a political movement: and all the minor objects (the Poor Law, Factory Bill, Truck System, etc., etc.) were subordinate to the grand and final remedy of the Charter!

He blamed Government inactivity: Peel's 'course on the Ten Hours was taken as the test and measure of his sympathy for the operatives of the kingdom'. Ashley was given to confiding to his diary the views on Peel which Ferrand and Oastler broadcast, in more robust form, to the world. Oastler himself ascribed the outbreak to the League:

The only question upon which the manufacturing operatives were all agreed was that of THE PROTECTION OF LABOUR, which, among other things, included the Ten Hours Factory Bill and the repeal of the New Poor Law.

And the 'war in the North was really conducted by the Leaguers against the Clergy and the Aristocracy'. *The Times* also held that the League 'abetted, instigated [and] excited the actors'.⁵³ This view was largely shared by Peel and Graham, whose collection of evidence was devastatingly used by Croker in the *Quarterly Review*; as was there shown, the League had talked of violence and League justices did little to halt the outbreak.⁵⁴

On the other hand, the free traders sought to blame the Protectionists. 'The cause was with Peel and the Aristocracy and their Corn Laws', Bright wrote. And he told the Rochdale strikers that

The aristocracy regard the Anti-Corn Law League as their greatest enemy. . . . Whilst that inhuman law exists, your wages must decline. When it is abolished and not till then, they will rise.

On 20 August the League Council also declared that Protection was 'destroying the profits of the manufacturers [and] reducing the wages of the working man'. The *Leeds Mercury* was more specific:

The Tories want to throw the blame on the Corn Law repealers and appear anxious to shake off their connexion with the Chartists. Do they wilfully forget they gave open encouragement to Oastler, Holland, Campbell, Ferrand and other declaimers against machinery?

Everywhere, free traders asserted their innocence, conveniently forgetting earlier plots; Cobden assured supporters 'on his honour' that the League had never considered a lockout.⁵⁵

Engels summarised the Chartist attitude, two years later: ⁵⁶

The League incited the workers to revolt in much the same way as the Chartists had done a few years before. . . . The workers were to pull the chestnuts out of the fire and burn their fingers for the benefits of the middle classes. . . .

Now, while Chartism lay smashed, the League, perhaps slightly chastened, resumed its agitation, having escaped serious implication. Richard Pilling, accused as 'the father of this great movement', gave the most cogent explanation of the workers' action, during his trial at Lancaster, in 1843. 'Our addresses', he said,

have been laid before the House [of Commons], and they have not redressed our grievances; and from there, and there alone, the cause comes.

Now aged 43, he started work as a handweaver at the age of 10. His wages had been regularly cut, until he 'became an opponent to the reduction of wages to the bottom of his soul'; consequently, he was blacklisted by the Stockport masters. On a wage of 'something like 16s. a week', he had tried to support a family of nine, one of whom died of consumption, being denied medicine because of Pilling's Chartism. When the Ashton masters announced a 25 per cent cut, Pilling felt that 'before he would have lived to submit . . . he would have terminated his existence'. He believed Bayley to be responsible for the strikes. And he summed up his case:

I was 20 years among the handloom weavers, and 10 years in a factory, and I unhesitatingly say that during the whole course of that time I worked 12 hours a day, with the exception of 12 months that the masters of Stockport would not employ me; and the longer and harder I have worked, the poorer and poorer I have become every year, until, at last, I am nearly exhausted. If the masters had taken off another 25% I would have put an end to my existence, sooner than kill myself working 12 hours a day in a cotton factory, and eating potatoes and salt.

The ragged crowds who tramped between the factory towns, brandishing crude weapons and chanting Chartist songs, who damped the mill fires and emptied the boilers, who begged for food and fought the Yeomanry, consisted largely of men like Pilling — men for whom the Factory Movement had worked and whom the League had long opposed.⁵⁷

VI

High tempers lingered after August. Graham busily collected evidence against the League, and the Chartists sought for someone to blame for the ruinous venture, as the arrests proceeded. But O'Connor was in one of his phases of allying with the middle classes, through the C.S.U. In August O'Connor, MacDouall, Vincent and Cooper supported Sturge in a violent Nottingham by-election; Doherty and Stephens aided the Tory Walter, who won by 84 votes, after serious rioting. But

Sturge announced plans for further collaboration between Chartism and his own Quaker brand of bourgeois Radicalism.⁵⁸

Interest in the 'condition of England question' was still rising, partly, no doubt, because of the strikes, but also through a variety of publications. In July Chadwick's famous Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population revealed the squalor of the great towns. Colonel Sir Charles Shaw, superintendent of Manchester police, described Manchester conditions, and Thomas Nunns, an Anglican priest, wrote on Birmingham, to Ashley. 'To be improvement', wrote Nunns,

it must not be partial, but universal; not variable, but constant; not local, but general and national: not the work of individuals and societies, but of Government and the nation.

To him, 'the first and worst, and most glaring evil' was the employment of young children; he wanted 'to keep [them], but most especially females, out of the manufactories altogether'; and the Church was 'the grand instrument' for their moral reformation.⁵⁹ Mrs. Tonna provided much the same sort of social-reforming Anglican piety in her once-famous tract, *The Perils of the Nation*, a year later. The first Report of the Children's Employment Commission had meanwhile revealed such atrocious conditions that Ashley was able to pass his Act to prevent the employment of women, girls and boys under 10 underground.⁶⁰

In September Ashley and his wife visited the North, staying with Kay-Shuttleworth — 'formerly my antagonist' — at Gawthorpe. On 26 September Ashley met the Lancashire committee at Manchester and asserted that

the measures which he had hitherto either carried or suggested were but the preliminaries in the great undertaking of domestic regeneration.

He was horrified that women had joined the recent riots, and diagnosed the nation's malaise:

Over a large surface of the industrial community, man has been regarded as an *animal*. . . . Women and children follow in the train of ceaseless toil and degrading occupation, and thus we have before us a mighty multitude of feeble bodies and untaught minds, the perilous material of present and future pauperism, of violence and infidelity. . . .

The remedy lay in shorter hours, sanitation, improved housing and better conditions generally; but the provision of 'opportunities of moral and religious education' was 'the only indispensable object', for

every child in these districts is an immortal being, and another generation neglected like the present and left in ignorance and sin, will probably witness the final extinction of the British Empire.

The *Morning Herald* assured Ashley that if he revealed the full extent of industrial tyranny, the Ten Hours Bill would soon pass.⁶¹ Certainly, there appeared to be rising support. Ashley was now involved in wider schemes, as founder-president of the Early Closing Movement and leader of Anglican demands for a national education system.

But the old controversies continued. The *Chronicle* remained hostile, and Cooke Taylor mocked Protectionist factory reformers as

pseudo-philanthropists who were exceedingly willing to be generous at the expense of the cotton manufacturer, but who were just as unwilling to be just in a far more atrocious case, which happened to touch their own pockets.

The Ten Hours Bill 'assuredly had no parallel in the annals of quackery', for it would 'diminish the time of labour, thus increasing the price of food and decreasing means of purchasing it'. He denied the reformers' whole case:

the toil was not very great, nor was it incessant . . . an operative in a cotton factory was at rest one minute out of every three.

And he feared that the Inspectors might 'fall into the error of exacting literal obedience to arbitrary rules'.⁶²

Hornby's partner, William Kenworthy, a philanthropic Blackburn Tory, wrote very differently. He ascribed current distress to improved machinery and long hours: 'too much importance by far had been attached to foreign competition'. Kenworthy thought that the first move should be an Act providing a 60 hours' week (10½ hours on weekdays and 7½ on Saturdays), giving opportunity for education, religious observance and wider employment —

and, as shorter time would employ more hands, there is no reason to suppose that the price of labour would be lower.

But, after all economic arguments, he believed that Religion and Morality demanded shorter hours.⁶³

The Akroyds and Gregs denied Kenworthy's thesis. Jonathan Akroyd's son Edward praised the new machinery, while Rathbone Greg explained, in a League prize essay, that Protection had 'undermined national prosperity'. R. H. Greg produced several Free Trade pamphlets, explaining agricultural techniques to backward tenant farmers. An anonymous Protectionist answered this 'advocacy of a free trade in corn for the benefit of the manufacturers': foreign, not British, tariffs had reduced textile exports, and free traders hoped to reduce wages to Continental levels. He challenged Leaguers to publish their donations to their distressed operatives, so that their humanitarian professions might be checked.⁶⁴

The League was now collecting a fighting fund of £50,000, and its travelling organisers were again engaged in virulent controversies. But the land occupied the thoughts of many agitators. O'Connor was already brooding over a massive scheme of peasant ownership, while Ferrand thought more soberly of an extension of smallholdings. The Labourers' Friend Society, with which Ashley was associated, had similar ideas. In September two Leeds operatives told Oastler that they hoped that a national society might be formed to buy up estates for working men.⁶⁵

Oastler continued his attacks on the League, the Poor Law and the Liberal factory masters. He still

recognised in the 'order' of the aristocracy (I wish I could say in the present race) that bulwark against despotism on either hand, from the Crown or from the oppressors of the people, which I have ever believed to be one proof of the beauty and strength of the English Constitution.

Angered by his removal from the Fleet to the Queen's Prison, he addressed his *Fleet Papers* to Graham, his new 'gaoler', from November :

I am a Tory of the olden time, you are a Conservative of yesterday. My employment is to *preserve* the Constitution, yours to *destroy* it.

Oastler's suspicion of Peel's attitude to Free Trade had some justification; in December Graham privately told Peel that 'it

was a question of time'. Quite unfairly, Oastler claimed that Graham had suppressed evidence on the free traders' responsibility for the summer riots. Oastler believed that England 'would be saved by the . . . working men'; but he was no Chartist, for

the present was a middle-class suffrage, and the Charter would give a working-class suffrage. He preferred the suffrage of ALL classes.

To him, 'O'Connor's great mistake was uniting with Sturge'. At a great anti-Poor Law rally at Ashbourne, in October, Ferrand also attacked Peel.⁶⁶ And in the same month a group of kindred spirits planned 'Young England' in Paris.

VII

After two years in prison, Oastler was again expressing himself with some violence. The stream of gifts and money from workmen and peers, clergymen and socialists, Society figures and factory children never died; but the continuing depression caused the Oastler Fund to languish. Luke Swallow, the new Lancashire secretary, sent an Address of thanks for his labours; but Northern workers could do little to facilitate his release. And in November John Ollivier decided that he must cease to be publisher of the *Fleet Papers*, because of Oastler's attacks on Peel.

On 27 December O'Connor publicly broke his uneasy alliance with Sturge, at the C.S.U.'s second conference in Birmingham.⁶⁷ While Mott, recently dismissed by the Commissioners, planned a Poor Law journal, old opponents like Wythen Baxter maintained a desultory warfare against the Act; and Walter continued to publicise such efforts. But the reformers were now thoroughly disillusioned with the Government which they had helped to return. Auty, a stout old-style Tory, told Oastler that Peel's Cabinet contained 'the most tyrannical and unconstitutional Ministers who had disgraced Her Majesty's Councils', and that if the League held a public meeting in Yorkshire, it would lose every resolution. 'The Corn Law League' [*sic*], wrote Robert Pounder, a Leeds operative,⁶⁸

you dont heare tell of your Yorkshire 'Subjects' Soporting them in thyr Nefaires Plans . . . we know that we have being Robbed of our Wages and by these who Profess to be our friends, just now. . . .

At Christmas Oastler received generous gifts from Bull, Ashley, Ferrand, Feversham, Perceval, the Huddersfield reformers and others. And on 18 December the Oastler Fund committee was revived, with Matthias Attwood as treasurer. The Factory Inspectors still reported overworking and evasion. But the agitation was soon to revive.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO CAMPAIGNS

1843 started dramatically. On 21 January Edward Drummond, the Premier's secretary, was murdered by the crazy Daniel McNaughten, in mistake, it appeared, for Peel himself. Many were inclined to blame the League. 'The more we hunt out these Leaguers, the viler vermin we shall find them . . .', Croker told Graham, recalling Bayley's words.¹ In February Bright advised Cobden that

Peel is fearful and wavering. Thy attacks must be upon him — give him all the responsibility — he can't long bear up under it. . . .

But when Cobden ascribed Northern distress to Peel, the Premier bluntly accused him of condoning murder. Even Brougham had recently condemned speeches 'calculated to produce taking away of innocent life'. In vain did Bright repudiate such charges.² The incident was quoted on many Protectionist platforms, and Ferrand later charged the League openly with responsibility for Drummond's death.

Sturge's Union decayed, but free traders were increasingly active. In London Philip Harwood explained the

question between the selfish interests of the few, the very few, and the plain, broad rights of the many,

and denied the 'intolerable absurdity' about lower wages. To him, Protection was 'Jacobinical, violent, thievish . . . spoliation, which power and privilege perpetuated on honest men's industry . . . an aggression by the might of property on the rights of labour'. Protection made operatives 'work 12 hours for the bread that might be got in 8 hours', claimed Harwood : ³

And the men that do this have the face to talk, virtuously and humanely, with genuine Pecksniff virtue and humanity, of infant slavery in factories. Why, it is their own iniquitous law that makes the infant slaves.

Cobden and Bright, touring Scotland, took particular care to deny that Free Trade was a manufacturers' ruse to reduce wages. But they and many others had previously been less circumspect. John Almack of Beverley prepared a collection of League sayings for Protectionists. He reviewed the course of factory and Truck legislation, pointing out that

The *liberal* party fought the battles of cruelty and oppression inch by inch, and not an atom of these inhuman practices would they give up without the most obstinate and determined resistance.

The League, he claimed, was in fact the 'Anti-Labour League'.⁴

But Free Trade was advocated from many standpoints. The Corn Laws hampered industry, reduced exports and created unemployment, claimed Harwood. 'The cause of free trade was the cause of civil liberty . . . the cause of political justice . . . the cause of peace'; and it was the cause of the 'progressive' intellectual, for 'Monopoly might be rich in dukes, but it was poor in thinkers'.⁵ Confident — at least outwardly — convinced, earnest, liberal, humane, pious, the League was now engaged on a massive propaganda campaign. Its high principles did not prevent some sharp practices; but an organisation containing so many prayerful Quakers was never at a loss for examples of divine favour. The efforts of the factory reformers must now be made amid the great Free Trade struggle, and against a wealthy, highly organised and well-connected body.

I

The battle array on Free Trade was well set out in Howick's debate on 'The Distress of the Country', which opened on 12 February. Next day Ferrand vigorously attacked 'Whig misrule' and Peel's Free Trade leanings:

he would not support any party . . . who would not stand by the principles which had placed them in power.

The answer to distress lay in 'a return to those principles of protection which raised this country to so high a pinnacle of greatness'. Workers' conditions had

been in a continual decline for many years, and the chief promoters of their distress were active members of the present Anti-Corn Law League.

Ferrand condemned the Ashworths and Gregs' 'infamous conspiracy' on Poor Law migration and presented a detailed indictment of industrial overworking. He asked for the protection of workers from the social effects of new machinery, blamed the League for the 1842 riots, and unsuccessfully called for an enquiry into them, and into the effects of machinery. 'The voice of suffering millions is echoed in the House of Commons', asserted Oastler, delightedly : ⁶

Mr. Ferrand has hit the right nail on the head — protection and regulation. He has dared to attack the giant evil — the misdirection of the power of machinery.

Ferrand assailed the League's *laissez-faire* liberalism on every possible occasion. He presented Lancashire miners' petitions for efficient coal-weighing, countered Villiers with charges on Truck and conditions, solicited information on migration and workhouses and protested against Guardians introducing treadmills and handmills.⁷ The Return on migration listed 4228 persons — a low figure which Ferrand profoundly distrusted ; Muggeridge had estimated 10,000 in 1837. These activities were enthusiastically supported by the predominantly Protectionist Operative Conservative Societies. The Bradford group praised Ferrand's 'manly and straightforward conduct in support of the Working Classes' over the Poor Law, and the Leeds society hoped he would continue to fight the 'Millocracy, Steamocracy and Machinocracy'. Birstall Tory operatives welcomed his 'endeavours to ameliorate the harsh and oppressive portions of the New Poor Law', and the Pudsey men congratulated him on exposing 'the trickeries practised by the Manufacturers'. Auty organised a Bradford meeting to thank him for ⁸

his bold, unflinching and persevering conduct, in successfully opposing the introduction of treadmills into the accursed Union bastilles, and thereby frustrating the wicked designs of the three despotic 'Kings' of Somerset House, and their master (or servant), Sir James Graham. . . .

Supported by this strong section of Northern Toryism, Ferrand was a much more informed opponent than the League cared to admit.

Walter helped Ferrand to plan his campaign. And Ferrand

was a founder-member of the Society for the Protection of British Industry, founded on 14 February, under Stanhope,

in order to obtain full and effectual Protection to British Industry, whether employed in Agriculture, Manufactures, Handicraft Trades, Mines or Fisheries.

He promised his constituents 'never to forget [his] pledges . . . nor to betray [their] interests'. Oastler supported all his activities; to him⁹

the only difference between the Whigs and Conservatives was that the former professed more than they practised, the latter practised more than they professed.

On 30 March Ferrand proposed a long-planned Bill for the allotment of waste lands. 'The working classes . . . were suffering misery, want and privation unparalleled in history', and his remedy was 'a general system of allotment of the waste lands . . . [to] restore the poor to their former comforts'. The need was urgent :

if *something* is not done for the working classes, and that speedily, the consequences will be most serious. . . . Thousands are in want and suffering, and have borne their distress and privation with a patience and humility that have been praised by almost every member of her Majesty's Government ; but praise will not fill empty bellies.

Ferrand proposed that some 15,000,000 waste acres should be taken by the landowners, with special allotments for the poor, sportsgrounds and — a modern touch — drying grounds : he knew 'the miseries of wet and tattered clothing'. He begged Parliament to 'restore' the rights of the poor, 'as a matter of right [and] . . . justice, of which they had for centuries been plundered'.¹⁰

William Atkinson and the Operative Conservatives supported the Bill, but it came to nothing. Ageing rapidly, Oastler gloomily watched the progress of the League. But his main occupation was attacking Graham and the Government :

the Chartists were much more attached to the principles of our Constitution than those Whigs and Conservatives who sought to promote the advance of Centralisation.

Never had 'a Secretary of State made and broken so many promises' as Graham on the Poor Law ; and Peel's Conservative Party consisted of 'the best of the Whigs and the worst of

the Tories'. A correspondent in the *Herald* condemned Oastler as 'a most lamentable monomaniac', writing 'mongrel Chartism' and 'virulent abuse'. But Oastler still had a large following. He was, 'in fact, for Conservatism what Cobbett was for Radicalism', declared the *Church Intelligencer*. Even German journals explained 'The Democratic Tory' to their readers.¹¹ And in the Commons, 'Young England' shared many of his ideals. Through Walter — who lost his seat in April — Ferrand joined their ranks, becoming a lifelong friend especially of Lord John Manners. Oastler, too, soon realised 'the honest ardour of Young England'.¹²

II

On 28 February Ashley delivered an important speech in the Commons, pleading for immediate action to promote 'a moral and religious education among the working classes'. He detailed juvenile delinquency, illiteracy and immorality, and appealed for 'laws and regulations not to abridge, but to enlarge freedom; not to limit rights, but to multiply opportunities for enjoying them'. The speech caused something of a sensation in the House and in the country. 'When disaffection stalks abroad, we are alarmed and cry out that we are fallen upon evil times', declared Ashley: ¹³

And so we are; but it is not because poverty is always seditious, but because wealth is too frequently oppressive. . . . We owe to the poor of our land a weighty debt. We call them improvident and immoral, and so many of them are; but that improvidence and immorality are the results, in great measure, of our neglect, and, in not a little, of our example.

Graham appreciated the need for larger educational schemes, and hoped that sectarian rivalries might now be forgotten. In his new measures on industrial hours and the Poor Law, he planned further educational extensions. Russell gave Whig support, but the High Church Inglis and dissenting Benjamin Hawes expressed religious doubts. Peel hoped for tolerance, and Ashley's motion was adopted. On 7 March Graham and Manners Sutton were given leave to bring in a Factory Bill, which was read next day. Already examined by the Inspectors and Blomfield, the Bishop of London, the Bill proposed to

allow employment from the age of 8, but to limit children under 13 to 6½ hours' labour, with 3 hours' education. The schools were to be inspected and new ones built; control would be vested in seven trustees, including the Anglican priest as chairman, two Churchwardens, two masters and two others chosen annually by the magistrates. Anglican religious teaching was to be provided, in addition to daily 'undenominational' Scripture lessons, and the children were to attend church; but non-conformists might 'contract out'. Costs were to be borne partly by the Exchequer and partly by the poor rates; fees, deducted from wages, were not to exceed 3d. weekly.¹⁴

Ashley's approval, wrote Graham,¹⁵

gratified me sincerely. There is no man whose approbation I value more highly, or whose displeasure has given me greater pain. I am willing to hope that the new Factory Bill will in the most important particulars satisfy your wishes.

The combination of Anglican 'National' and nonconformist 'British' methods was, Graham hoped, 'consonant with the principles of the Established Church, and, at the same time, to the utmost extent consistent with the honest principles of toleration.'¹⁶ He told the Rev. G. R. Gleig that ¹⁷

I do not propose to have a chaplain in the Factory Schools; they will not be strictly Church of England schools. . . . I am afraid of Elections of Ratepayers and of the presence of Dissenting Ministers on the Trust, side by side with the Clergyman of the Establishment. Mine is a measure of Peace; I am afraid that this compound would effervesce with one drop of acid. . . .

But after the Second Reading opened on 24 March, the Bill was assailed by both supporters and opponents of the Ten Hours Bill, the greatest opposition coming from the non-conformists. Baines junior ascribed the measure to the sinister machinations of Inspector Saunders — 'a very zealous and bigoted High Churchman' — and Dr. Hook; it was

a deep scheme for getting the education of the whole people into the hands of the Church, [and] a declaration of war against all the Dissenters in the Kingdom.

He forecast strong opposition to the 'Jesuitical cunning', 'priestly monopoly' and 'Puseyite-Popery' of this 'Bill for

establishing a compulsory Church Education at the public expense'. Ashley's charges against the North were unfounded: Leeds had 'more education, more religion and less vice' than aristocratic and episcopalian Westminster itself.¹⁸

Organised Dissent soon followed the *Mercury's* lead. Within a few weeks, 11,611 petitions bearing 1,757,297 signatures reached Parliament from a variety of nonconformist groups. The 150 favourable petitions were predominantly Anglican, but support was lukewarm; many Churchmen hoped for further restriction of hours.¹⁹ Brotherton, Hindley, Philips, Cobden, Russell and Sir George Grey censured the power given to the Church, and dissenting journals constantly attacked the Bill. Considering it an attack on itself, the League supported a Manchester meeting; Hindley and several ministers spoke at Ashton; Vincent, now a Complete Suffrage lecturer, at Manchester; and Stephens at Ashton. Nonconformist delegations visited Graham, and each denominational conference condemned the proposal.²⁰ Under the promptings of Free Church ministers — many of them factory reformers — a Scottish campaign was raised. Edward Baxter, the Dundee Congregationalist master, explained that 'if their English brethren became the victims of this measure, Scotland would become an easy prey'; and the Rev. D. K. Shoebotham condemned the 'gross violation of parental right and patronage'. A great Glasgow rally, under the Lord Provost, Sir James Campbell, assailed the Bill's 'Puseyite-Popery' on 17 May. Even the Inverness Secession Church passed its resolutions.²¹

The *Bradford Observer*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Manchester Times* and several London journals fully supported the dissenters. The *Mercury* concentrated on its dark suspicions of the Tractarians. To the *Glasgow Argus*, the Bill was 'not merely bad, but incurably bad'; and the *Dundee Advertiser*, now a Free Trade organ, took the opportunity to denounce 'that silly meddling person Lord Ashley' and all factory legislation: 'every step taken in this direction was an invasion of popular rights'. The *Advertiser* now wanted 'free trade in commerce, in labour, in emigration and in money'. The Bill's few defenders made little headway, although the *Aberdeen Journal* pointed out that ²²

those fantastic religionists commonly called Puseyites were as adverse to the Education Bill as were the Dissenters.

The nonconformists primarily condemned the Bill's attempt to

aggrandise the secular power and lessen the spiritual and moral influence of the Church, by the oppression of other Christian forms of faith.

Graham had struck a 'destructive blow at civil and religious liberty'.²³ Particularly hateful was the provision that the school-master should be an Anglican, confirmed in his appointment by the Bishop. The menace of 'Puseyism' was regularly proclaimed. Dissenters could 'discover the Jesuit lurking behind every clause', a barrister told Graham. And nonconformist divines hastened to predict new Smithfield fires if the Bill should pass. Dr. Cox of Hackney condemned the

all-pervading, all-corrupting, all-unscriptural principle of the right of the civil magistrate to interfere in matters of religion.

The 'voluntaryist' attitude was carried to extremes. Addressing the British and Foreign School Society in May, Dr. Andrew Reed denounced

all compulsion in the matter of education . . . the child is not allowed to pay, [but] there is some virtue in paying.

He demanded that 'we shall be free: in labour, free; in trade, free; in action, free; in thought, free; in speech, free; in religion, free; — perfectly free'. Similarly, the *Dundee Advertiser* thought that 'equally monstrous' to the religious proposals was the plan to 'make education compulsory'.²⁴

Not all dissenters followed such classic extremes of liberalism. Henry Dunn, the 'British' schools secretary, moderately analysed Graham's proposals, suggesting amendments to grant money to nonconformist schools. Almost alone among his fellows, he considered Ashley's revelations 'dark indeed, but truthful'.²⁵ But politics and religion, liberalism and dissent, intermingled in the crescendo of protest. It was held that the school trustees would 'probably all [be] Churchmen and Tories'; and

It was a tyrannical stretch of power to compel parents to send their children to any school at all, much more to do so without leaving them any choice as to the school, and most of all to compel attendance and exact the provision of a school-fee.

Baines energetically 'exposed those horrible and unparalleled slanders' which had misled Parliament into thinking that the North required Governmental interference. He collected detailed statistics on religious and educational accommodation voluntarily provided, and feared that State action might destroy private effort.²⁶

Thus dissenters' opposition, violent, contradictory, suspicious and often unreasoning, mounted angrily. 'Free' education and school fees, local control and centralisation, clerical power and State usurpation, the principle of State subsidy and nonconformist exclusion from it — all were indiscriminately condemned. Radical 'secularism' and Liberal economics butressed outraged theological liberalism. 'The Factory Bill overstocks the Trade with hands and thereby reduces wages and ruins the workpeople', affirmed the self-explanatory title of a paper by Francis Thorpe. Baines temporarily neglected the exposure of the villainous designs plotted at Leeds Vicarage to deliver one of the economic homilies beloved by his father, announcing that 'the monstrous mass of tyranny' would cut wages and increase adult labour, pleasing only 'some of the violent and silly Chartists'.²⁷ A pamphleteer who had observed 'the results of a centralised system of education during 13 years' residence in France' told of the evil effects of State schemes, the abolition of fees and the guaranteed payment of teachers. And the principal objections were poetically summarised by one Spencer Murch.²⁸

Petition, and petition still,
For 'tis in fact a Tory Bill . . .
Yours is the treat to pay and boast;
Theirs to possess and rule the roast; . . .
Resist, in every form and state,
This Pusey scheme to educate . . .
. . . all should tell the State
She has no right to educate.

III

The strength of opposition surprised the Ministry. Even the Methodists had dropped their traditional 'respectable' isolation; Graham considered that

the Pusey tendencies of the Established Church had operated powerfully on the Wesleyans, and were converting them rapidly into enemies.

In all, 13,369 petitions bearing 2,068,059 signatures opposed the original Bill, and 11,839 petitions with 1,920,574 names attacked the amended proposals.²⁹ Only 170 petitions and 312,669 persons favoured the educational clauses. An obscure petition from Tywardreath and S. Blazey tried to cast doubts by advocating an enquiry into how so many hostile petitions had been collected; but antagonistic papers were, as Graham himself admitted on 1 May, 'numerous almost without parallel'.

The nonconformists' educational facilities provided some justification for the heated defence of 'voluntaryism'; but they were far behind the Church. Horner was

disappointed to find so little disposition on the part of the more wealthy dissenters . . . to come forward in the cause of the education of the working classes; all the activity which had come to his notice, in places where schools were most wanted, had been on the side of the Church.

The second Report of the Children's Employment Commission had severely criticised the predominantly nonconformist Sunday schools, and a hostile report on 66 'British' schools by Tremenheere was published in April, when it probably aggravated nonconformist anger. Saunders bluntly declared that many parents in the industrial areas ³⁰

would send their children to a school where the principles of Mahomet, or the worship of blocks or stones were inculcated, if only the school-fee was less at such a school than at the best school in the neighbourhood.

Dissenting attempts to detect Tractarian designs behind the Bill were merely efforts to arouse Evangelical prejudices. High Anglican opinion, in fact, resisted the Bill as a menace to ecclesiastical autonomy. Graham believed that 'as long as there was an established Church in the country . . . that Church ought to enjoy the preference'. But Churchmen remained unconvinced, particularly distrusting 'undenominational' religious teaching — a 'heartless, though specious' scheme, one priest told Ashley. The Rev. George Sandys

opposed either control or concession, protesting against 'Erastian interference' and contemporaries' 'affectation of a zeal for the preservation of religious liberty of conscience' — which was ³¹

equivalent to saying, 'let our poor be dissenters, let them be infidels, let them be atheists, let them be anything, so that they be not Churchmen.

There was a measure of truth in this retort to the libels of Baines and Miall.

Clerical opposition greatly distressed Graham. He told one hostile clergyman, the Hon. Horatio Powys, rector of Warrington, that ³²

My sincere wish is to obtain the co-operation of the Church on terms which will not exclude Dissenters from the benefits of the measure; but if this is impossible, it will still be the duty of Parliament to provide means of educating the Factory children. . . .

In fact, the heads of the Church were willing to make substantial concessions. Writing of the amended Bill, Kay-Shuttleworth told Russell that ³³

Churchmen are prepared to confide the chief control of education to the civil power, to submit their schools to the management of a trust of mixed character, chiefly elected by popular suffrage, to afford complete protection to all classes of Dissenters and Romanists, and even to admit into the schools an inspector appointed by the civil power alone.

But the Right, already restive under Peel's leadership, was hostile. Oastler 'entirely disapproved' of the relay schemes and State control implied in the Bill, which was 'an aggravation of the evil it was intended to remove'. But he also lashed the dissenters' 'din':

they, as a body, care not one rush what becomes of the poor factory children . . . their ministers and deacons and members were, with few exceptions, the flatterers or apologists of the monster tyrants.

He maintained his traditional Tory-Anglican opposition to centralisation, and darkly suspected Papist plotting to harm the Church.³⁴ Gladstone also feared the loss of Anglican influence.

He had taken a deep interest in the National Society's work, and in 1838 wrote to Hook of ³⁵

a safe and precious interval, perhaps the last, to those who are desirous of placing the education of the people under the efficient control of the clergy.

In reply to Gladstone's doubts, Graham wrote that

by the Education Clauses, as they now stand, the Church has ample security that every Master in the new schools will be a Churchman.

But he recognised that

the enmity of the Dissenters is roused to the uttermost; and they will succeed in defeating the measure, at least in the sense which led me to propose it as a scheme of comprehension and concord. If I fail, I am not sorry that I proposed it.

To Stanley on the same day he confessed that

the Dissenters will be too much for us. They will convert my measure of Peace into a Firebrand and a Sword; and if we attempt to force it, we shall do harm rather than good. . . . Since the Dissenters refuse to co-operate, we must assist the Church and rely on her increased exertions. . . .

Nevertheless, he wrote, 'I do not regret that we made the proposal. It was an honest one.'³⁶

IV

Ashley pleaded for the Bill, both in Parliament and to Evangelical religious bodies. But four days after the Second Reading debate, even he urged Graham to postpone it:

another debate on Petitions, before you have settled *where your Bill stands and what you will yield*, would be most injurious. You would, moreover, make no progress.

But he could not drop his own campaign, as ³⁷

I entertain so deep a feeling on the horrid indictment and National Sin of this accursed system, that I do not dare to treat the question as I would any . . . secondary matters.

On 10 April Russell tabled amendments designed to secure ratepayers' representation on the trusts. During the Easter

recess, Graham consulted the Bishops of London and Chester, and gained notable withdrawals from the original rigid Anglican stand. He was ³⁸

deeply convinced that the measure, even as altered, would be conducive to the strength and welfare of the Established Church and to the spread of Christian Truth and saving Knowledge among the people. He had never felt greater anxiety for the success of any measure.

But opposition continued, and Graham received Wesleyan protests which, to his surprise, 'went the whole length of the bitterest dissent'. Ashley explained 'the real history' of the campaign to him: ³⁹

The Wesleyan Methodists, hitherto friendly to the Church, as they showed in 1839, are actuated by a deep and conscientious fear of Popery in the Church of England . . . no truth and no falsehood have been spared to excite and terrify the people. . . . The Clergy have not petitioned, partly because so many are hostile and partly because the remainder know not how to commence action — had the Bishops given any hint, we should have had many petitions.

The Committee stage was twice deferred, while the Bill was altered. On 1 May Graham still urged the Commons to discuss his 'olive branch' calmly. He had accepted Russell's suggestion, though rejecting the idea of elected chairmen. He also decided to allow 'independent' schools to grant educational certificates to factory children, provided that they were inspected, and to make Sunday religious observances entirely voluntary, on a 'contracting-in' basis. Russell welcomed these changes, still hoping for 'an efficient education for the working-classes'. But nonconformist suspicion could not be allayed. Further discussion was thrice postponed, though on 18 May the House overwhelmingly rejected Roebuck's proposal for purely secular education. On 15 June Graham sadly decided to withdraw the education clauses. Thus altered, the Bill was ordered to be printed for the third time, and again passed to the Committee.⁴⁰ But, after four further deferments, the proposals were postponed. Dissent, declared Peel, had gained 'a sorry and lamentable triumph'. Ashley agreed that the failure was 'a sufficient proof that "United Education" was an impossibility'. But, he told the Premier,⁴¹

Your Government has nothing to regret except the loss of a healing measure. You would have much to regret had you not propounded it. But you have endeavoured to remove a great evil, and in doing so have thrown the responsibility before God and man on the shoulders and conscience of others.

The nonconformist victory was partly won by dishonest tactics. There was little sign of the Puseyite plotting imagined by the *Globe* and other journals; indeed, Ashley regretted the Bill's 'few zealous friends'.⁴² Nor was there real evidence for Baines' charges that the proposal emanated from clerical collusion with the Inspectors. Saunders had certainly reported on 'The Establishment of Schools in the Factory Districts', in February 1842, and had stated his belief in Anglican educational superiority. With his fellow Inspectors he had repeatedly called for more schools; and he had discussed the Bill with Hook, who was 'much delighted' with the educational clauses. But Hook himself, as he told Gladstone, would have preferred the Church to raise the money herself and retain full control. Three years later, while urging the State to provide a scheme allowing 'denominational' teaching, he again advocated this policy for the Church.⁴³ Attacks on the proposals as a 'reactionary' plan of the Tory Right were equally false. The *Morning Post* feared Disestablishment, and *The Times* thought the amended Bill unworkable. O'Connor's *Star*, oddly, supported Graham, probably because Northern nonconformity opposed him. But Auty angrily told Peel,⁴⁴

I laboured hard, during the last election, to place you and your colleagues in office; but if this is the order of the day, then farewell Conservatism.

'The fierceness and strength of opposition', thought Ashley,

were not the sole reasons of withdrawal . . . the apathy of our own friends, lay and clerical, was a death-blow to any hope of immediate or final success. No one liked the scheme, though many acquiesced in it; all desired that it should not pass, because one part thought it would do real harm, and the other believed it would do no good.

But he also, unjustly, 'suspected Graham'.⁴⁵

The failure of the 1843 Bill did not long postpone factory reform. But the establishment of a national education system,

towards which Graham was reaching, was held back for nearly thirty years.

V

Graham's proposals helped to promote the revival of the Ten Hours agitation. On 21 May Lancashire delegates, meeting in the Red Lion at Manchester, promised 'never to relax [their] exertions until a Ten Hours Bill was obtained' and petitioned Parliament, through Ashley. But such voices were drowned by the cries of the nonconformists, who continued to rally until after the Bill was withdrawn, although their planned Kersall Moor demonstration ended as a small meeting at Newton. Only in the late summer could the committees meet effectively. In July the Bradford men decided to prosecute offenders under Althorp's Act, while Downes and Pilling revived the Ashton committee.⁴⁶ But Ashley was far from optimistic. He considered Peel and Russell 'the most criminal of mankind'; but Graham

has rendered himself so thoroughly odious that I cannot find one human being who will speak a word in his behalf. . . . He is universally distrusted; and this by everyone from a prince to a beggar. Mainly by his influence, the Ten Hours Bill has been refused, and the amendment of the Factory Act delayed.

On 31 July Peel confirmed that the Bill would be postponed until the next Session; and Graham dissuaded Hindley from moving for leave to introduce a Bill restricting the moving power.⁴⁷

Oastler still issued characteristic essays on current affairs. 'Had there been no New Poor Law, there would have been no Anti-Corn Law League', he told the Protectionists. 'The land-owners had

denied the RIGHT of the poor to support [and] they, with equal justice, now denied the RIGHT of the landlords to rent, nay, even to life!

By refusing to amend industrial and pauper legislation, Government had severed the last ties between the labourers and the land; 'hence the laws had lost their moral efficacy'. Oastler saw the Rebecca riots as yet another anti-Poor Law campaign.⁴⁸

Auty informed him of Bradford conditions, complaining of recently established taverns, dram-shops and brothels. And Oastler strongly rebuked O'Connor for supporting a Whig candidate in London; if Chartists favoured such Liberal free traders as Gisborne and Pattison, then ⁴⁹

the Chartists were the enemies of the working classes and allies of the money and factory mongers.

Oastler also welcomed rising Tory-Radical activity. In August the Wakefield Guardians demanded the dissolution of their Union. The redoubtable Dr. Sleigh announced his intention of touring the industrial towns to address working-class Protectionists. And W. E. Burroughs, the energetic secretary of the Spitalfields weavers, urged London workers to unite for 'a protective system against machinery in its unregulated use, and against foreign and home competition'. Stanhope, Sleigh, Oastler and 9000 workers signed his memorial to the Board of Trade, soliciting an enquiry into their conditions. Gladstone told Graham that

we *have* promised that an enquiry, if it shall be found to be generally desired by the operatives, shall not be opposed by the Gov^t and we have intimated that it would be considered whether this particular mode of procedure by Commission was the best. . . .

When Shaw Lefevre asked for the weavers' views on previous Commissions, they replied that the evidence of Stephens and Atkinson had been omitted. Oastler explained their case; but Gladstone and Northcote parried their demands.⁵⁰ *The Times* still assailed Graham on the Poor Law, and *The Spectator* published articles on 'The Factory System' and 'Our Social Condition'. Bull re-entered the fray, speaking at Birmingham and Leeds against long hours. And Rider called on all the committees to revive their organisation and to concentrate first on securing Oastler's release.⁵¹

Meanwhile, Ashley was preparing for action, discussing policy with Crabtree in October. He had been subjected to considerable abuse after League agents investigated Dorset agricultural labourers' bad conditions, especially on the Shaftesbury estates. Alexander Somerville, a drunken old soldier, was employed on this work. It was quite clear what his employers

expected him to discover on the estates of Protectionist supporters of factory reform. Four years before, Cobden had planned to expose 'that aristocratic and canting simpleton', Ashley, with a woodcut of 'The Landowner and the Factory Child', picturing him stealing bread from factory children, while advocating the Ten Hours Bill 'in a very sanctimonious tone'. But Ashley was unfairly blamed; he had no control over his family's land, and in November angered his father by denouncing the county's low wages and bad housing.⁵² Nevertheless, the League's counter-attack on the Landed Interest made a considerable impact. 'I grieve to say that South Wales bids fair to rival Ireland', Graham told Peel in December: ⁵³

Poverty and the misconduct of Landlords are at the root of crime and of discontent in both countries. This is a truth not the less dangerous because it cannot be openly declared.

The League continued to gather strength, organising several spectacular demonstrations from its new London headquarters. Already it was engaged in widespread canvassing and manipulation of electoral registers; by November it seemed to *The Times* 'a great fact' and 'a new power . . . in the State'.⁵⁴ With its enormous resources it launched campaigns far beyond the means of other groups; but Free Trade doctrines made little impression in the countryside, and writers still expressed a variety of views. 'If protection be right, why has it been taken from us?' John Dyson Fernley rather naïvely asked his fellow manufacturers: 'if it be wrong, why is it given to others?' Even in the industrial areas there remained strong opposition. When Sleight spoke at Saddleworth, uttering 'tirades of abuse against masters, Free Trade and the League', he was supported, noted the League's journal, by

the redoubtable Joshua Hobson, the publisher or editor of the *Northern Star* . . . [who] spoke about 2 hours in the true Ferrand style, abusing masters and employers, the Free Traders and the League, his speech being a mixture of Chartism and Toryism and a compound of heterogeneous absurdities.

To the League, Hobson was ⁵⁵

a fellow labourer with the editor of the *Standard* . . . and as bitter an enemy to the League as any other trader on passion and prejudice, on ignorance and vanity, on false pretences and shameless assertions.

O'Connor was now engaged in London organising his Land Scheme, which a Birmingham Convention adopted in September. His departure further weakened Northern Chartism; but he also condemned the free traders: 'their only aim in life was to buy labour in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest'.⁵⁶

Literary controversies continued. Mrs. Trollope's *Jessie Philips* revealed her 'detestation of the newly broached doctrine' on the Poor Law. Mrs. Browning published a *Song of the Factory Children*; Manns made his *Plea for National Holydays*; and Carlyle, examining *Past and Present*, condemned the 'present system of individual Mammonism and Government by *Laissez-faire*', stating that 'Legislative interference, and interferences not a few, were indispensable'. The second Report of the Children's Employment Commission and the Midland Mining Commission's Report on South Staffordshire gave documentary support to such appeals. But James Wilson's new *Economist* propounded extreme *laissez-faire* views, and Herbert Spencer narrowed *The Proper Sphere of Government*. The *Edinburgh Review* condemned philanthropists who ignorantly meddled with industry, and called on Britain to 'unfetter the springs of the national industry'. Mrs. Cooke Taylor, after visiting Ashworth's mills, was 'totally at a loss to account for the outcry'; she found operatives 'better clothed, better fed and better conducted than many other classes of working people'.⁵⁷ The 'condition of England question' now attracted national interest; but the old opponents of reform were as resolute as ever — and much better organised.

VI

In September *The Times* considered it 'high time to do justice to Richard Oastler', and many other journals took up the call. Ferrand offered his services as a speaker, to help in raising funds.⁵⁸ And on 15 November West Riding supporters met at Roberttown under John Tweedale, and formed a Central Committee at Brighouse, which included Ferrand, Fielden, Walker, Auty, Stocks, Glendinning, Pollard, Leech and Jonathan Scholefield of Rastrick — Thornhill's oldest tenant and an old-style manufacturer, 'whose principal pride had been to make the best goods and pay the highest wages in his district'.

Pitkeithley was appointed secretary and William Beckett treasurer. Soon afterwards, Thomas Daniel formed a Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire Central Committee, with Grant, Thomas Fielden, Joseph Gregory, Richard Cobbett, James Leach and R. S. Sowler, a Tory barrister who edited the *Manchester Courier*. Feversham presided over a London committee, including Sinclair, Atkinson, Burroughs, Sleigh, Walter, James Cobbett, Jowett, Perceval, the Rev. M. A. Gathercole and three Tory M.P.s, Ferrand, Rashleigh and C. R. Colville.⁵⁹ Throughout the country, Tory papers commended the scheme, and even old opponents welcomed the fund.

The 'Oastler Liberty' campaign was inaugurated at a great meeting in the Huddersfield Philosophical Hall on 22 November, under John Fielden. The speakers included Madden, vicar of Woodhouse, Pollard, Walter, Auty, Walker, Scholefield, Titus Brooke, Stocks, Smithson, Pitkeithley, Wildman and J. U. Walker of the *Halifax Guardian* — a remarkable assembly of Tories and Chartists. Amid great cheers, Ferrand declared himself 'a disciple of Mr. Oastler' and 'denounced the [Poor] Law in a voice which none could silence, in language which none could contradict', the *Intelligencer* reported :

Labour ought to be protected. Labour was the source of all wealth ; and unless the working classes were fully employed, and their employ amply remunerated, the nation would be ruined.

Walter hastened to report to the delighted, moved and grateful Oastler.⁶⁰

Ferrand now started the most strenuous speaking tour of his life. Through his simple, but impassioned, oratory, the campaign became a Tory-Radical crusade. On Monday, 27 November, he spoke in the Bradford Temperance Hall, with William and Charles Walker, Titus Brooke, Auty, Pitkeithley, Pollard, Balme and four priests — Morgan, J. L. Frost, James Cooper and William Sherwood. Ferrand delivered an onslaught on the Poor Law as 'a great blow levelled at the working classes', and explained that

He belonged to a small party in the House of Commons, which was pledged never to cease agitating for the rights of industry in that House, until the working classes of England obtained that protection for their labour which was awarded to every other description of property within the British realms. . . .

Next day he spoke in his home town of Bingley, in the tavern bearing his family's name; and a local committee was formed. On Wednesday he visited Dewsbury, where a large gathering was assembled in the magistrates' room, under the vicar, Allbutt, supported by Tweedale, Brooke, Pitkeithley, the Rev. J. W. Hepworth, J. W. Jenkins, a Batley priest, and Thomas Micklethwaite, editor of the *Wakefield Journal* and an old 'Ten Hours' man. Ferrand announced subscriptions from Kenyon and Stuart-Wortley, lashed the Poor Law and hoped that Oastler would enter Parliament — 'then there would be no thimble-rigging'. A solitary manufacturer who interrupted the proceedings was howled down as a Truck-payer.⁶¹

Thus the Liberation campaign started well. Subscriptions were listed from Tory Members like Manners, Hornby and C. N. Newdegate, Radicals like Fielden, O'Connor, Captain Wood and the Cobbetts, such manufacturers as the Walkers, John Wood, the Fieldens and Peter Fairbairn and many operatives; the Duke of Cleveland and Lords Eldon, Northwick, Stanhope, Blantyre and Kenyon mingled with Burroughs, Weatherhead, Hobson and Crabtree, Operative Conservatives with Chartists. Over fifty Anglican priests and several Liberals subscribed to the fund. Even Baines was persuaded to donate £5, and even the *Bradford Observer* supported the cause. Seventy collectors worked in the Huddersfield district, and collecting books were issued in many mills.⁶² Everywhere, there was praise for Oastler — 'this able, consistent and truly philanthropic man', to the *Literary Gazette*; 'there was no living man who deserved better at the hands of the Church', asserted the *Church Intelligencer*. Ferrand too was congratulated: 'his conduct was beyond all praise' to the *Wakefield Journal*, and the admiring *Times* declared that his work 'did honour to his heart'. The *Northern Star* referred 'with heartfelt pleasure' to the effort to liberate one of Britain's 'best men', whose imprisonment was 'a national disgrace'. And the *Halifax Guardian* pointed to the support of⁶³

the good old clergy of the good old Church of England, by whom in their pastoral visitations, the evils of the old factory system had been felt in a degree only less than by those whose actual strength and sinews it overtasked.

Ferrand began the second week's campaign at the Leeds court-house on 4 December. 'He coincided in almost every political sentiment which Mr. Oastler had spoken or written, that he knew of', and launched his usual tirades on the Poor Law. It was Government's duty to grant

equal protection to all classes of property. The property of the poor man was as much entitled to protection as that of the rich man. It was to the property of the poor man that they owed the wealth and grandeur of the land.

Supporting speakers included Dr. Smith, Hobson, George Bulmer — a surgeon — Charles Walker and Smithson. A local, all-party committee was formed, including Smith, Goodman, Bower, Hobson, Baines, Atkinson, Smithson, Rider, John Hutton and John Beckwith of the *Intelligencer*.⁶⁴ Next day Ferrand spoke in the Keighley Working Men's Hall, supported by Joseph Vickers, Auty and Firth, and on Wednesday he moved to Barnsley, aided by Smithson and local Tories and operatives in the Oddfellows' Hall. He promised an enthusiastic audience that 'he would never rest satisfied until the accursed [Poor] Law was blotted from the Statute Book'. The factory system was

unscriptural and at variance with the Divine Word of God, for that blessed Book tells us that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; but unregulated machinery prevents him from doing that.

And Ferrand asserted that the Leaguers

go up and down, deceiving the working classes by crying out for free and cheap bread, when, at the same time, they mean more slavery and less remuneration.

He next moved to Wakefield, where the court-house was crowded, under Captain Wood, who reaffirmed his Radicalism. Pollard spoke as 'one of the old school, an ultra Tory', and Ferrand, delivered his usual speech: '10 hours a day was sufficient for any human being to labour'. Another local committee was formed.⁶⁵

In addition to Ferrand's campaign, the operatives organised smaller meetings in the manufacturing villages. And very wide support was given by the Press. 'His country owes [Oastler] a heavy debt', wrote the *Standard*, 'and his country ought to

pay it.' The *Morning Post* doubted whether workers 'would make the slightest effort' for any other man outside politics and religion, and the Peelite *Morning Herald*, though opposing most of Oastler's opinions, recalled that he was 'the first man who directed public attention to the wrongs and crimes of the factory system'. A wide range of provincial journals echoed these sentiments. Many writers attacked Thornhill, whose estates Oastler had improved and for whom he had performed much unpaid work. It was now hoped to raise funds both to liberate Oastler and to provide an annuity, which would allow him to enter Parliament.⁶⁶

Gratefully and optimistically, Oastler watched the campaign. 'All personal warfare is ended', he declared, on hearing of Baines' aid. But the all-party unity for a philanthropic object could not be maintained, especially, perhaps, as Ferrand made his tour into a Ten Hours crusade. The *Globe* commented on Oastler's 'very large defalcations' and considered him to be simply 'an anti-Poor Law agitator', who had caused riots and destruction: the campaign was 'an experiment on public gullibility, which deserved no favour'. Oastler's imprisonment, it insisted, was 'caused by his refusal to do right', and his agitation was got up by 'Tory ingenuity . . . for party purposes . . . seeking to enlist the prejudices and passions of the labouring classes in their designs'. Oastler answered the 'base and malignant slanderer', and the *Standard* condemned the *Globe's* 'wretched want of taste' and 'coarse injustice'. Auty told the Bradford meeting that Oastler was twice offered his freedom in return for pledges on his political activities; and this story was widely spread. Several subscribers expressed disagreement with some part of Oastler's philosophy. But when Oastler explained to Kenyon his Tory views, Kenyon cordially agreed with them.⁶⁷

On Monday, 11 December, Ferrand addressed about 3000 people in the Halifax Oddfellows' Hall. Scholefield was chairman and other speakers included Stocks, Glendinning, J. U. Walker, Robert Wilkinson (a local Chartist leader) and Hobson, who praised Ferrand as

a gentleman . . . to whom the people of Halifax were deeply indebted for having prevented the introduction of a mill into their bastille to grind 'devil's dust'.

Ferrand told how he had prevented the abolition of outdoor relief at Keighley, and promised to continue the fight, while opposing riots. A Halifax committee was established.⁶⁸ Three days later he crossed into Lancashire.

The campaign was much more than a series of meetings for Oastler's liberation. Each rally was a Ten Hours and anti-Poor Law demonstration; and Ferrand's fervent oratory restored the old passions. In Yorkshire there was little opposition, despite some heckling at Dewsbury and Halifax. But now that Ferrand moved to the citadel of the League — which was already 'preparing' the Knaresborough electorate to reject him at the next election — heavier clashes could be expected.

On 14 December John Fielden chaired a meeting in the Manchester Corn Exchange, supported by Gregory, Sowler, Leach, Stephens and J. P. Cobbett. 'In the midst of the enemies' camp', Ferrand denounced the League:

Are the masses of England to be destroyed for the benefit of the few? To whom is England indebted for its great pre-eminence? — to the working classes. . . . Ever foremost against their foes abroad, it is too bad that they should be crushed by foes at home.

As examples, he mentioned the efforts of Alderman John Brooks, a prominent millowner and Leaguer, to induce him to oppose the reduction of duties on coffee (in which Brooks had speculated), and William Williams, the Free Trader Member for Coventry, whose watch-making constituents opposed Swiss imports. Ferrand condemned economic discussions which took no account of social conditions:

We are now divided, as nearly as possible, into two classes — the very rich and the very poor. Search history, and you will learn that no country can long exist in which society is broken into such widely distant divisions. We must have the intermediate links, amalgamating into each other, descending with a regular and even gradation, in order that the monarch on the throne and the peasant in the cottage may alike enjoy the privileges and blessings of our free and glorious constitution.

At a League meeting in Manchester on the same evening George Wilson, the president, declared that

Juggle after juggle had been tried, from the bluster of Ferrand to

the foul slanders of Peel. The League had met the one with silent contempt and risen with three-fold triumph above the dark insinuations of the other.

Nevertheless, Brooks raced from the meeting to enliven the close of Ferrand's speech, claiming that his canvass at Westminster had been misunderstood. But his explanation appeared to substantiate Ferrand's allegation that blunt 'self-interest' lay behind the League's unctuous façade of morality. The meeting roared delightedly at Brooks' admissions; but the controversy long continued.⁶⁹ When Brooks denied the charges in *The Times*, Ferrand recalled that Cobden had denied paying in Truck and later sat silent on a Committee when this was proved. Ferrand claimed to have proof of the League's responsibility for the 1842 riots and that a Leaguer had talked of shooting Peel shortly before Drummond's death. Abel Heywood, the Manchester publisher, confirmed the salient details of the last charge, while Cobden claimed that his workers were glad to receive his cows' milk.⁷⁰

The other Lancashire meetings were smaller, and usually quieter. Ferrand spoke in the Oldham Town Hall on 15 December, meeting 'the most heartfelt welcome', according to *The Times*. Next day, with Gregory and local operatives, he spoke in Bolton Temperance Hall. As a 'Tory of the old school', he announced the Protectionist social policy as the enactment of Ten Hours, abolition of the 1834 Poor Law and the establishment of industrial arbitration machinery. Two days later he addressed Stockport men in the Hall of Science, supported by Tories and Chartists, against some heckling during his attack on Wilson and the League. 'You little know your man if you think of putting me down by your interruptions', roared Ferrand. He explained that the Ten Hours Bill

is intended to stop the present disgraceful system of working married women in the factories, and also to check the system of sending young children into the mills merely for the sake of lucre. Good God! England can afford to be a mighty nation without murdering her children in cotton mills.

He went on to attack the Poor Law, 'passed at the instigation of the Gregs and Ashworths of the League', to reduce wages.⁷¹ Next day he spoke at Ashton 'in high spirits', and

on 20 December reached Preston, where he spoke in the Theatre Royal, primarily against the Poor Law :

There was not a pin to choose between the parties. He might say, however, that it originated from the greatest mountebank that ever performed, and . . . had to claim its supporters from the two parties, Whigs and Conservatives, but not from among the Tories of the good old school. . . .

From Stalybridge he moved to Todmorden on 22 December, before returning home for Christmas.⁷²

Considerable interest was aroused in the tour. The Liberal *Liverpool Mercury* quoted Oastler's 'violent and seditious speeches' and accused him of pocketing money from Thornhill's mineral leases. In the rival *Liverpool Standard* Oastler replied that he had sent his speeches to the former Premier but had never been prosecuted ; the other charge was completely false.⁷³ The *League* and the *Chronicle* were the most hostile reporters. 'There was the Rev. Mr. Stephens of Ashton notoriety, side by side with the editor of the High Church organ', the former commented on the Manchester meeting : ⁷⁴

there were ex-Chartist leaders, the worn-out tools of O'Connor, cheek and jowl with Tories of the ancient Jacobite school ; there were, in a word, Eldonites, Cobbettites, O'Connorites, Stephensites, Oastlerites ; in fact, there were men of every kind, excepting the rational men of free trade.

The League's reporter thus demonstrated the wide range of Oastler's supporters in Manchester itself. But those who called themselves Tories had a very different social philosophy from that of official Conservatism. In December Graham complained that many Guardians

shelter themselves under a preference for Out-door relief, which, as administered by them, would be a recurrence to the old system. . . .

Nevertheless, he told Wharncliffe, the New Poor Law had 'saved to the Ratepayers, with a growing population, two millions annually . . .'.⁷⁵

On Boxing Day Ferrand resumed his tour with a meeting at the Rochdale Theatre, where he was heckled by free traders, under Bright's brothers, and by ultra-Radicals. The *League*

alleged that he received 'a wholesome check' and a 'storm of withering reprobation and scorn', but Ferrand claimed to have been supported by all but a few Republicans. He moved to Bury next day and on 28 December to Liverpool, where he told a great rally in the Commercial Hall that

as long as machinery was an assistant to manual labour, it was a blessing to the country; but as soon as it was become the substitute for manual labour, it was a curse.

Again he lashed the League, which, 'having driven the labouring classes to rebellion, like cowards left them to be pitched upon the bayonets of the soldiers'.⁷⁶ The last meeting of the 1843 campaign was held in Sheffield Town Hall on 29 December, when Auty, Micklethwaite, Isaac Ironside and the Chartist John West joined Ferrand. They were strongly heckled by Leaguers, and the Rev. R. S. Bayley unwisely moved an amendment. Ferrand read out Bayley's threats against Peel; he 'had them in the frying pan and would fry them' and he

gave Mr. Bayley to the free traders with all his heart: he trusted he would not subscribe to the fund, for one farthing of his money would pollute the whole lump.

With Ferrand standing on a chair to bellow his attacks above the commotion, the noisy campaign closed.⁷⁷

Many smaller townships, or towns beyond the committees' old area, had formed groups and raised funds at such places as Wibsey, Fulneck, Birmingham, Greenwich, Holmfirth, Southowram, Fixby, Hunslet and Warwick. Money was also collected at the Huddersfield Conservative Festival. And on New Year's Day William Hill spoke at a rally in the Freemasons' Hall at Hull.⁷⁸ On 22 January Ferrand addressed a great meeting in the Dublin Rotunda, organised by Irish Protestants, under his friend, the Rev. T. D. Gregg. The platform included five clergymen, several magistrates and Dr. Giffard of the *Standard*, who delivered a panegyric on Oastler. Auty, who admired Oastler as 'a Protestant in principle, not a cold, milk and water, expediency-mongering Protestant', excitedly described the meeting to his hero. And Ferrand delivered his last speech in the Nottingham Assembly Rooms on 6 February, again causing disputes over the Poor Law.⁷⁹ He had addressed 22 meetings.

VII

Ferrand's tumultuous campaign considerably aided the extension of the Factory Movement; the 'Oastler Liberation Committees' soon became 'Short-Time' and 'Ten Hours' committees. The Bill was again brought to the forefront. But, as always, Ferrand had created virulent controversy. One James Mitchell, a Preston free trader and 'Complete Suffragist', condemned his 'most wanton, wicked and false attacks' on Brooks, calling him 'a Yorkshire oaf' and 'a monstrous thing without a memory'. Mitchell denied opposing reform: he was ⁸⁰

for still shorter time; and to make that consistent, would repeal the Corn Laws, extend the suffrage, settle the national debt, and the Church too, by equitable adjustment, and set man free.

Thus one section of free traders tried to outbid the factory reformers. Ferrand's allegations on League violence were countered by Nicholas Smith, who held that the Protectionists were 'like vermin retreating to a corner', and accused Ferrand, Hobson, Oastler, Stephens 'and such like' of 'personal worthlessness', 'professional dishonesty' and 'political recklessness'. If McNaughten had been taught to murder,

he studied in that school, the teachers of which are and have been, the Tory Chartist correspondents of the *Standard* and *Times* — a school of which these papers are themselves the chief patrons — the school for teaching how to war against the master manufacturers.

Ferrand and his associates were inciters and incendiaries,

who, in hypocrisy the most disgusting and most criminal . . . professed to be the conservators of our institutions . . . [but were] the instigators of outrages [and] the adopted friends of the *Standard* and *Times*.

Hobson and Ferrand, who had blamed the League, were themselves 'the very Alpha and Omega of revolution, spoliation of property, levelling of ranks and destruction of all existing institutions'.⁸¹ These attacks were largely unfair, especially to Ferrand, who had condemned all violence; but in standards of argument, there was little to choose between the two sides. Reformers accused Liberal masters of 'murdering' children,

while Leaguers accused Protectionists of 'starving' them. In January League agents descended upon Ferrand's constituency.⁸²

Although Ferrand had gained massive support, in current industrial conditions operatives could only subscribe small amounts to the Fund. Despite large contributions from Wood, Feversham and others, the Fund could announce no such great sums as the Marquess of Westminster's £500 donation to the League. The free traders were now collecting a £100,000 fund; but they, as their first historian boasted, were supported by⁸³

Mr. Samuel Jones Loyd, the wealthiest individual of the monied interest; . . . Mr. Marshall of Leeds, the wealthiest of the manufacturers; and . . . the wealthiest of the nobility [Westminster].

The factory reformers had no such supporters.

The Fund raised £2053, but Thornhill's claims, with costs, expenses and interest, now amounted to £3243 : 15 : 10. However, Oastler's deteriorating health increased the committees' anxiety, and on 6 February, after a discussion at Brighouse, Pitkeithley announced that Oastler was to be released. Pollard, Scholefield and Ferrand arranged to borrow money from Beckett's Bank, with Scholefield, William Walker, Ferrand, John Milner, Pollard, Isaac Milnes, Walter, William Underwood, Feversham, John Fielden, Pitkeithley and Glendinning as guarantors. Plans were instantly made for Oastler's reception; sheets of poetry were published, and a rally was arranged at Huddersfield for Shrove Tuesday.⁸⁴ 'Where is the working man, within reach of the spot, that will not be there?' asked the *Northern Star*, which had recently published Edward Mead's poem on 'The Brave Old King'⁸⁵ —

Then ye millions who toil for the lords of the soil,
And the lords of the dread steam king,
Your gratitude show to the tyrants' foe,
And your cheerful tribute bring.
One heart and one mind, let King Richard find,
Till to freedom we him restore,
And justice be done by the 'Altar and Throne'
To the 'Cottage of the Poor'.

On 12 February Oastler left his cell, escorted by Rashleigh and others to a celebration luncheon with the London

committee, in the British Coffee House. There he met and thanked Ferrand, Feversham, Walter, Atkinson, Burroughs and Pollard. 'Mr. Oastler would add dignity to the House of Commons when he obtained a seat in it', declared Ferrand. Next day *The Times* welcomed the return of 'The Ransomed Patriot', who

would never have been shut up in a prison . . . but for his persevering advocacy of the Ten Hours Factory Bill and his resistance to the New Poor Law. Mr. Oastler's liberation, therefore, was a popular triumph. . . .

Prematurely aged beyond his 54 years, but optimistic and determined, this 'providential organ of the oppressed and suffering poor' travelled North to receive the tumultuous welcome of his supporters.⁸⁶

CHAPTER TWELVE

FACTORY LAWS AND CORN LAWS

ON 6 February 1844 Graham introduced a Bill largely following the 1843 drafts, but including women in the 12 hours restriction, extending to silk mills and prohibiting 'making-up' time except in water-powered mills which had been completely stopped. Daily education was provided, without the controversial methods suggested in 1843; and children were to work in either the morning or the afternoon. At the Second Reading, on 12 February, Ashley caused some argument by alleging that child piecers often walked twenty-five or thirty miles daily during their work.¹ Again, the reformers were determined to convert the measure into their own Bill.

Oastler arrived in the North in time to assist the new agitation created by Ferrand. On 20 February he was received by Bull and the Central Liberation Committee at Brighouse, and accepted an Address from Tweedale and Pitkeithley. In procession with Bull, Stocks, William Hulke, Scholefield and other Tories and Radicals, he triumphantly entered Huddersfield, where he was greeted by a huge crowd, parading banners with such legends as 'Oastler and Native Industry' and 'Oastler and No Bastille'.² The Movement was ready for a full-scale campaign.

As an indication of the renewed vitality, twelve delegates were sent to Westminster. Grant and Samuel Howarth of Oldham visited Russell, Howick and Palmerston — whom they particularly impressed by demonstrating the working of machinery and the distances walked, by an intricate arrangement of chairs in his London drawing-room.³ In the North Oastler made a short tour to thank his supporters and encourage the reviving committees. On 26 February he addressed the Leeds committee in the Fleece Inn, claiming that there would be no need for Inspectors — who were really Government spies — if the power were restricted or personal punishment

allowed. If the Ten Hours Bill did not pass soon, there would be a rising demand for 8 hours ; and Oastler advocated repeal of the Poor Law. He wanted full-scale Protection, but had no faith in such leaders as the Duke of Richmond, whose 'anti-English and anti-Christian' schemes did not include Protection for Labour.⁴

Robert Baker's Essex Protection Society had been followed by numerous farmers' groups, and in February a Central Agricultural Protection Society was founded, under the Dukes of Richmond and Buckingham. Among the Society's 18 supporting M.P.s were Cayley, Beckett Denison, Miles, Newdegate, Stafford O'Brien, Sir John Trollope and Lord Worsley. Its propagandist, Cayley, declared that

To sacrifice a portion of the industrious classes, in a crusade after cheapness, without securing to them a new demand for their labour, is an injustice, great in proportion to the dependence of this class for a livelihood on their daily toil. . . .

He concentrated on the evil effects of Free Trade on workers' conditions.⁵ In February, too, the Earl of Harewood, John Rand, John Horsfall, Lord Beaumont and other landowners and manufacturers formed the 'Yorkshire Protective Committee for the Defence of British Industry', also declaring that Free Trade would reduce wages — which Baines indignantly denied.⁶

The events leading to Oastler's liberation ensured that he remained a public figure. 'He was remarkable', commented *The Illustrated London News*,

. . . especially for the extraordinary control which he exercised over the minds of great assemblages of working men, the secret of which was his long-tried honesty and his disposition and ability to promote the real interests of the poor and oppressed.

It expected that he would soon enter Parliament.⁷ But Northern generosity dried up after Oastler's release, and in June Underwood told him that there was now no possibility of a public career and that he must obtain work. In addition, Oastler lost his £500 counter-claim on the Thornhill estate ; the old squire had promised payment, but after his death his successor refused.⁸ Oastler was again virtually beggared.

I

Although the Factory Movement received a stimulus from Oastler's arrival, opponents were also strongly arrayed. Northern masters met to protest against Graham's proposals, arrange petitions and select delegates. The C.S.U. was dying after a farcical London meeting on 31 January, but the League was ever-stronger and its Parliamentary strength was increased by Bright's election at Durham in the previous July. In addition, Ministers were known to be hostile to Ashley's Ten Hours amendment. When Graham rather surreptitiously introduced new Poor Law legislation in February, Ferrand again tried to prevent the separation of families; in an Irish debate, he claimed that 'out of the [Poor Law] had sprung Socialism, Chartism and the League'. Dublin Protestant Operatives strongly supported this 'manly speech of the noble-hearted Ferrand'.⁹ But Ferrand's highly personal mixture of Protectionism, Protestantism and old-style Toryism made no impression on Government. 'Factory Bill postponed', Ashley uneasily recorded on 27 February. 'Shall I ever prosper in this? Will God smile upon the endeavour?' Three days later he heard ¹⁰

unpleasant rumours that Government (is it possible?) will exert their Parliamentary influence to defeat the Ten Hours!

On 5 March the Northern campaign was inaugurated at a moderate-sized rally in the Bradford Temperance Hall. Polard was chairman and speakers included the Walkers, William Rand, Jowett, Auty and four Anglican priests — Scoresby, Morgan, Sherwood and Cooper.¹¹ Strong clerical support was maintained throughout the subsequent campaign, giving it the appearance of a religious movement. On 8 March Vickers organised a Keighley meeting, and Huddersfield met on the same night. Next day Oastler ended a country holiday to address an enthusiastic rally in Leeds Music Hall, supported by Smith and Bulmer of the Infirmary, Hook and two other priests — J. Clark of Hunslet and Nunns of S. Paul's (recently arrived from Birmingham) — Jowett, Hobson and Smithson. Hook explained that

It is contrary to nature that children should be the bread-winners of the family. Fathers ought to support their families; it is a monstrous thing to find them supported by the labour of little children, the parents being, perhaps, all the while idle. . . . Our desire, our object, is to have the men of the working-classes not overworked, and to emancipate the children and females. We are assembled, therefore, to assist human nature under its most helpless and most lovely form; and I think that, engaged in such a cause, we are labouring not only for the promotion of man's happiness but for the promotion of God's glory.

Local Chartists prolonged the meeting for an hour with their resolutions. But in supporting them, Harney announced that they 'supported the Factory Bill, because it recognised the principle of protection to human industry'.¹²

Oastler travelled to Manchester on 13 March, for a rally in the Corn Exchange, where he was supported by Gould's friend, Cecil Wray, a Fellow of the Collegiate Church, William Huntingdon of S. John's, T. R. Bentley of S. Matthew's, Jowett, Gregory, Scholefield and Leach. 'No man who had a human heart and could feel at all for human suffering, could refuse to support "Ten Hours"', declared Wray, condemning industrial conditions:

. . . if men were designed for this world alone, and had nothing to do but work, this would be all very well; but mankind needed to be instructed in their duty to God and to each other; and how could children be taught, if they were made to work 12 hours a day?

Jowett revealed that the actuary Woolhouse had found the piecers' distances to be between 14 and 32 miles, depending on the thread. Again the Chartists were a nuisance; W. V. Jackson, a dissenting minister, proposed their resolution, but the debate was stopped by Leach and Christopher Doyle, two staunch 'Ten Hours' Chartists.¹³ Each meeting sent a petition to Parliament.

But Ashley faced many difficulties. Graham, he believed, 'clearly feared a full *exposé*' in the Committee stage. On 8 March he was attacked by Godolphin Osborne in *The Times*, for not remedying 'agricultural grievances'. This seemed a 'strange accusation' to Ashley, but next day's *Times* commented that 'these factory ten hours men never dreamed of agricultural

wrongs until forced to it by their fears'. The charge appeared monstrous to Ashley :

eight years exclusion from the paternal house, and three of utter impossibility to interfere while there, would answer any imputations.

Three days later he missed the journeyman tailors' dinner, to hear Cobden deliver a 'temperate and often true' speech on Dorset conditions, but was restrained by reluctance to oppose George Bankes, his fellow Member, and his father. There was ¹⁴

no disguise on Cobden's part that he wished to pay me off for exposing the factory districts. Felt humbled, dejected and incompetent. . . .

On 15 March Ashley proposed his Ten Hours amendment, in a moving speech on the clause on night work. 'We ask but a slight relaxation of toil', he declared :

A time to live and a time to die ; a time for those comforts that sweeten life, and a time for those duties that adorn it. . . .

Graham opposed the proposal, while Milner Gibson thought it unfair to concentrate legislation on textiles. Bright considered Ashley's speech gave 'a one-sided view, a most unjust and unfair view', based on Dodd's lies ; what the people needed was Free Trade. The reformers' delegates thought that Bright spoke in 'a style perhaps the most vindictive towards the working classes ever made in the British Parliament'. Egerton and Sandon supported Ashley, and Bright had to apologise for his personal attacks. The debate lasted until 2 o'clock, and Ashley believed that he had scored an 'outstanding personal success' :

Had we divided last night, we should, I am told, have beaten the Government ! The interval will be favourable to them ; official whips will produce official votes.

This suspicion was soon confirmed ; Derby twice approached Ashley, through Jocelyn, to drop his proposal, which might endanger the Corn Laws. Ashley refused.¹⁵

In the resumed debate on 18 March, Howick, Beckett, Grey, Fielden, Russell, Hindley, Hardy and Muntz supported Ashley.

Peel had urgently collected information from Horner, particularly on the experience of masters voluntarily working 10 hours and on the effect on wages. Now he sarcastically asked the House whether it would legislate for other industries. To his surprise, the agricultural Members roared an affirmative answer, and when he asked whether they included agriculture, they still cheered; but Peel 'could not and would not acquiesce'. Ashley's amendment was carried by 179 votes to 170 as an amendment and by 161 to 153 as a motion. The decision, said Graham, was 'a virtual adoption of the Ten Hours Bill without qualifications', to which he had 'an insuperable objection'. The reformers at last appeared to have won their case. Their victory 'appealed to the moral feelings' of *The Times*: 'it was a triumph of humanity', though it seemed scarcely believable that ¹⁶

one legislative House of the greatest Empire in the world had resolved on the largest national interference in favour of poverty and industry in the history of this or any other country.

The reformers were naturally delighted. 'My supporters [were] wonderfully firm; had no whipper-in, yet they stuck to me admirably', wrote Ashley, in a rare moment of optimism. Though expecting the Government Whips to gather support, he rejoiced at defeating

the most powerful array of capitalists . . . the strongest domestic apprehensions and the most powerful Ministry of the last 15 years! Struggle as they will, the question is passed; it may be delayed in its final accomplishment, but surely it cannot be reversed. . . .

He found 'everyone satisfied, except Peel and Graham, who were furious in temper'. As Ashley sent off messages to the North, Howarth and the delegates addressed the Queen, thanked supporters and adopted Ashley's idea that hours should be reduced in stages; the committees agreed.¹⁷

Liberals were horrified by the news. The *Dundee Advertiser* condemned Ashley's 'spurious humanity' and 'mad crusade'. The *Glasgow Argus* called for 'an unrestricted system of trade' and even its rivals, the Peelite *Courier* and *Constitutional*, which believed that 'a Corn Law and a Ten Hours Bill could not co-exist', commented that 'benevolence and wisdom did not

necessarily go hand in hand' and that 'few men produced so much mischief as persons of his Lordship's stamp'. *The League* bitterly noted that¹⁸

A large section of the Monopolists have supported Lord Ashley's amendment . . . they have made an attack on the manufacturing interest, in the hope of injuring the League. . . . For the first time in the annals of commerce, a British Parliament has asserted its right to restrict the profits of capital and the wages of labour. . . .

Peel told the Queen that he was defeated because¹⁹

a great body of agricultural members, partly out of hostility to the Anti-Corn Law League, partly from the influence of humane feelings, not foreseeing the certain consequences as to the Corn Laws of new restrictions upon labour, voted against the Government.

He was collecting further information and gathering his supporters. 'Ministry are very much vexed at the majority of Lord Ashley, and are making great efforts to beat him', Sydney Smith told Countess Grey :

and it does seem to be absurd to hinder a woman of 30 from working as long as she pleases ; but mankind are getting mad with humanity and Samaritanism. . . .

Greville thought similarly. 'We are just now overrun with philanthropy', he wrote, 'and God knows where it will stop, or whither it will lead.'²⁰

But Graham did not drop his Bill, and discussion continued on the other clauses. On 22 March he described the 8th clause, limiting women and young persons to 12 hours' labour, and Ashley spoke for 'Ten Hours', supported by Manners, Brotherton, Inglis and Charles Buller and opposed by Cardwell of Clitheroe and Ward of Sheffield. The House proceeded to reject Graham's proposal by 186 votes to 183, but went on to oppose Ashley by 188 to 181,²¹ thus producing a fantastic *impasse*. Greville

never remembered so much excitement . . . nor a more curious political state of things, such intermingling of parties, such a confusion of opposition ; a question so much more open than any question ever was before, and yet not made so or acknowledged

to be so with the Government; so much zeal, asperity and animosity, so many reproaches hurled backwards and forwards.

The *Leeds Times* commented,²²

The discussions and divisions on the Factory Bill have been of the most confused and almost ludicrous kind. Whigs, Tories and Radicals are jumbled together in inextricable disorder. . . .

Five Members — William Aldam, Captain Archdale, William Ewart, John Martin and George Palmer — were criticised for having joined the 'Noes' in both divisions, thus causing the trouble; but, in Aldam's case at least, the votes were based on considerable research and were in accordance with Leeds masters' support of an 11 hours compromise.²³

Analyses of the divisions proved interesting. While Ministers' threats to resign if defeated had deterred some Tory reformers, several Whigs had joined Ashley's side. Tories remaining loyal included Bankes, Beckett, Borthwick, Alexander Cochrane, Beckett Denison, Grimsditch, Hardy, Hornby, Inglis, Andrew Lawson, Manners, Milnes, Stafford O'Brien, Lords Sandon and Pollington, Rashleigh, Sibthorp and John Stuart-Wortley. But Ashley was also supported by Ainsworth, Brocklehurst, Brotherton, Busfield, Cayley, the Hon. W. F. Cowper, Crawford, T. S. Duncombe, Fielden, Grey, John Heathcoat, Hindley, Napier, Russell, Strickland, Henry Tufnell, Wakley and Lords Arundel, Palmerston, Howard and Howick, among Whigs and Radicals. Opponents included Lords Barington, Lincoln, March and Stanley, Lord George Bentinck, Ireland Blackburne, Bright, Edward Buller, William Feilden, Gisborne, Gladstone, Goulburn, Graham, Hobhouse, Labouchere, Leader, Maule, Patten, Peel, Philips, Roebuck, Ricardo, George Smythe, Stansfield, Strutt, Villiers and James Stuart-Wortley.

The Whig 'conversion' was far from complete. Greville noted that

John Russell voting for 'ten hours', against all he professed last year, has filled all the world with amazement and many of his own friends with indignation. . . .

Earl Fitzwilliam, the anti-Corn Law leader of Yorkshire Whiggism, protested to the Duke of Bedford:

No government could be formed upon this principle, or, if there could be, I would do my very best to get rid of it as soon as

possible. But my belief is that no such could be formed. But if no government could be formed, or exist, upon such principle, no opposition, no leader of a party in opposition, has any right to lend his own, and his party's weight, to the principle in question. . . .

Greville shared this Whiggish sentiment about the Commons' 'odd predicament':²⁴

The whole thing is difficult and unpleasant. Government will carry their Bill now, and Ashley will be able to do nothing, but he will go on agitating session after session; and a philanthropic agitator is more dangerous than a repealer, either of the Union or of the Corn Laws.

Ashley was indeed determined, believing that

the cause was mightily advanced. . . . The House of Commons never saw, before these events, such an utter resignation of party feeling on all sides, to the assertion of a great act of humanity. . . .

And, he declared,²⁵

though defeated now, I have a right, which I shall endeavour to exert on every legitimate occasion. I shall persevere to the very last hour of my existence. . . .

II

Northern agitators, realising that their hopes had been dashed once more, were less philosophical than Ashley. Balme organised a Bradford meeting of overlookers and Scoresby's 'Committee for Improving the Factory System', on 23 March, to express 'greatest surprise and sorrow'; he also thanked supporters and urged them to 'continue their patriotic support'. London reformers solicited the support of the Lord Mayor. Many writers lampooned Gibson's reliance on Senior's 'last hour' argument; a possible small loss of profits 'did not appear excessive' to *The Spectator*, as 'the purchase money of two hours' leisure per day for the whole slaving population of our cotton manufacture'. But the *Globe* attacked Ashley as 'the Prince of canters', while Baines mocked his supporters as 'a strange combination of Socialists, Chartists and ultra-Tories'.²⁶

On 25 March, when the debate was resumed, Graham attacked Ashley's proposal as 'the commencement of a "Jack

Cade" system of legislation' — a taunt recently made in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* — and asked leave to withdraw his Bill. 'What a scene in the House last night', wrote Ashley:

The tiptoe of expectation, everyone anticipating an Eleven Hours Bill. I was prepared to accept it, reserving to myself the power of moving whenever I pleased. It would have settled the question for at least two years. Graham, I am told, very hostile in Cabinet. Peel for it; determined, however, to resist.

Graham's sneer, thought Ashley, was 'indecent, foolish and stupid; but he did himself thereby irreparable mischief . . .'. Ashley agreed to the withdrawal, and Graham promised to introduce a new Bill, on which Ashley planned to ²⁷

do what he could not have done on the old Bill — take a debate and division on the simple question of ten hours!

Graham introduced the new proposal on 29 March. It would limit children of 8-11 in silk mills and 8-13 in other textile industries to a half day of 6½ hours, allow surgeons to certify children's stamina as well as age, and order the fencing of dangerous machinery; but for women and young persons it still provided 12 hours' labour.²⁸ George Higginbottom's Lancashire committee petitioned the Queen for Graham's dismissal; and the extent of the Movement's revival was demonstrated by the fact that delegates from 22 committees signed the paper — representing Wigan, Horwich, Leigh, Waterhead Mills, Warrington, Chorley, Preston, Hyde, Tyldesley, Stockport, Hindley, Bedford, Heywood, Manchester, Chowbent, Bury, Ashton, Bolton, Oldham, Burnley, the Manchester spinners and the central group. And Howarth's London delegates tried to arrange a meeting with the masters' delegates under Henry Ashworth, suggesting that two Lancashire Members from each side — Egerton, Sandon, Patten and Philips — should join them. But Ashworth merely retorted that the Corn Laws made the two extra hours vital. Charles Wood claimed that Northern workers opposed Ashley, and was challenged to give proof in debate with Fielden at Halifax; he also refused.²⁹ The Yorkshire Central Committee held a rally in Bradford Temperance Hall on 27 March, when Pollard, Scoresby, Charles Walker and Dr. Outhwaite were the speakers. They recorded 'deep regret' at the opposition and their belief that

'the just claims of the Factory Population' required a 10 hours' day for young persons; 'no sound reason had been offered to justify their present period of employment'.³⁰ The North was now thoroughly aroused; the Movement was stronger than ever and was soon to mount its greatest campaign.

III

Though weakened by his imprisonment, Oastler obtained permission from his Testimonial trustees to join the agitation; William Walker contributed £30 to his expenses. The campaign began in Leeds Music Hall on Easter Monday, 8 April. Hook was chairman, supported by seven other Anglican priests, two surgeons, Smithson, Hobson, Hutton, Jowett, Balme and William Walker. The Chartists Harney and Pounder proposed the Ten Hours resolution; and Ferrand delivered a ringing speech in support. 'Who are the men who say that you shall not have the Ten Hours Bill?' he asked:

They are those who have grown rich by the sweat of your brow, who know not what it is to have a day's want, while you know not what it is to have a day's peace and contentment.

He claimed that 'if it had not been for [Graham's] cold-blooded dogged stupidity', they would have the Bill. 'If Peel were to resign tomorrow, [Ferrand] for one would not shed a tear'; and he warned the Premier that 'he was not going to play the same game in 1844 as he did in 1829'. Oastler answered Wood: in fourteen years of campaigning in every factory town,

the Ten Hours Bill has been enthusiastically passed, and unanimously, too, save on two occasions — once I remember to have seen 3 hands held up against it, and once two.

Hook explained his presence: 'it was his duty, as vicar of the parish, to defend the weak against the strong'.³¹

Leeds set the pattern for elsewhere. Next day Oastler and Ferrand addressed a large outdoor meeting at Bradford, with Pollard, Auty, William Walker and three clergymen. Again Ferrand lashed Graham and Peel. *The Times*, which reported the campaign in detail, thought that opponents were unwise to doubt the operatives' support: Ferrand and Oastler 'spoke with their usual decision and force', at Leeds — 'and were

listened to with an enthusiasm like their own'. It rejoiced at the clerical support and particularly noticed Ferrand's charge that J. W. Hogg, Tory Member for Beverley, had unfairly unseated Walter. 'Mr. Ferrand speaks his mind distinctly and fearlessly', *The Times* observed. 'He is apt to say what he and many others are convinced of, though few have the courage to lay the accusation fairly before the world.'³² Graham was now accustomed to journalistic hostility. 'We suffer much from the hostility of the Press', he told Peel, 'but we are not its slaves, and I would rather have it for my enemy than that it should be my master.'³³

On 10 April Oastler spoke in the Huddersfield Philosophical Hall, with the vicar, Josiah Bateman, and three other clergymen, two surgeons, Leech, Hobson and Glendinning — who welcomed clerical supporters and pointed to the absence of non-conformist ministers. Next day Oastler addressed the largest indoors meeting yet held, in the Halifax Oddfellows' Hall. Traditionally, clerical support was weakest in this parish; James Baldwin, an operative, took the chair, and the supporting speakers were Fielden, Hobson and several local workers — Robert Sutcliffe, G. J. Marshall, Robert Wilkinson, Benjamin Rushton, James Clayton and D. J. Chippendale. On Friday a crowded meeting was held in a Keighley chapel, under Weatherhead, when the resolutions were moved by Firth and Vickers. *En route* from Halifax, Oastler and Ferrand also spoke to an open-air crowd at Bingley. The first week's campaign ended in Holmfirth Town Hall on 13 April, under E. Woodland, incumbent of Holmebridge, supported by another priest, several masters and operatives and Jowett. This meeting saw the first sign of opposition, when two local Leaguers opposed the Bill, but were overwhelmingly defeated.³⁴

Meanwhile, the manufacturers had not been inactive. On 10 April, in the Oddfellows' Hall, the greatest Halifax employers, including John Crossley, John Ambler, John Baldwin, William Holdsworth and the Akroyds, resolved that a 10-hour day would cut wages by one-sixth and harm foreign trade. Liberal journals still maintained that the workers opposed Ashley, and, with some Government supporters, impugned Ashley's sincerity. The *Glasgow Courier* thought that Ashley had gained nothing, but had 'utterly destroyed' the Conservative Party's

integrity. Its Dundee namesake, on the other hand, commented on the Government's 'false position', which 'would not add to [its] popularity'.³⁵

John Lawton planned a large Lancashire campaign, finally arranged at a delegate conference at the Red Lion in Manchester on 14 April. Delegates were told to bring information on local hours, technical changes, female and child employment and the piecers' 'distances'. Manchester, Ashton, Bolton, Stockport, Hyde, Bury, Blackburn, Chorley, Chowbent, Preston, Oldham, the Central Cotton Spinners' Committee, Bedford, Wigan, Leigh, Lees, Hindley, Horwich and Heywood were represented. They reported that piecers walked at least a third longer than the spinners, and challenged doubting opponents to hold an investigation. Ashley had been attacked on this point. 'Mill-owners have got out a manifesto contradicting me on every point, and specially on distances', he recorded on 6 April: 'I hold to my statements. If I be refuted, my career as a public man is over . . .'. The reformers' support reassured him. He sent 'a challenge to Greg and Ashworth to meet Fielden and Kenworthy and superintend the re-measurement of the distances'.³⁶ Greg and Ashworth did not accept.

Immediately after the conference Oastler opened the campaign's second week in the Preston Temperance Hall on 15 April, with Jowett and local workers. Next day Oastler and Jowett appeared at the Bolton Temperance Hall, with Samuel Howarth and two clergymen. Both crowded rallies enthusiastically carried Ten Hours motions.³⁷ But when Oastler reached Manchester on Wednesday, he faced a strong League contingent. The audience in the Corn Exchange was estimated at over 3000, and an impressive platform was assembled, under C. D. Wray; the principal speakers were Oastler, Ferrand, Walter, Fielden, Huntingdon, W. Johnston of the Collegiate Church, the Rev. J. Scholefield and Father Daniel Hearne, a popular Temperance campaigner and one of the Movement's few Roman Catholic supporters. Ferrand delivered his usual onslaught on the Poor Law, the Liberal masters and the Ministry, and, stout Protectionist though he was, declared that

Mr. Hearne . . . told you that this Ten Hours Bill will, in all probability, be the downfall of the Corn Laws. If the Corn Laws

should stand in the way of the Ten Hours Bill, let them fall this very night.

And Walter defined his ideal of 'domestic legislation':

the great object of home legislation is, or should be, to improve the condition and strengthen the foundation of the great basis of society, the industrious, the operatives, upon whom the whole structure of human society rests; for if this be disturbed and unsettled, there can be no tranquility or security above.

The meeting was regularly interrupted by 'rambling observations' from James Mitchell.³⁸ But the usual resolutions were passed.

From Manchester Oastler moved to Stockport, where he spoke in the Equestrian Circus, supported by Jowett, Leach and West. He left early, to speak in Oldham Town Hall, where Halliday, a local manufacturer, Fielden and Birt — a local Baptist minister, who claimed that not all dissenting ministers favoured 12 hours — had already spoken. The rector of Stockport and vicar of Oldham, though both unable to attend, sent supporting messages. Next day Oastler travelled to Blackburn, for the first time since 1836. The vicar sent a supporting message, and the platform included three clergymen, two surgeons and several masters, including Kenworthy; the theatre was crowded. The second week of the tour ended at Ashton on Saturday, 20 April, when Oastler was greeted by over 8000 people. He was joined by Pilling and Howarth, but was now exhausted.³⁹ The campaign had been a remarkable affair; *The Times* reporter had 'never before known such an extraordinary exhibition of versatility on one subject'.

The April campaign covered every textile area; there were meetings in Bury, Accrington, Chorley, Rochdale, Glasgow, Norwich and many smaller places. Clerical support had reached a new peak. Even the Queen was asked for support by the London delegates. Oastler's *Fleet Papers* and the London Press covered the meetings in detail.⁴⁰ Ashley learned that Peel again intended to offer him a post, and again resolved to refuse. But he was shocked to learn that Borthwick had offered to reverse his vote on the Ten Hours, in return for Henry Baring's support for a Bill which he was proposing.⁴¹ And opposition remained strong. Sydney Smith told Lady Grey that

The protection of children is perhaps alright, but everything beyond is mischief and folly. It is generally believed that if the Ten Hours Bill is carried, Government will resign.

The liberal-minded wit was an unsympathetic witness. 'What a singular event — these divisions upon the working hours of the common people!' he wrote: '. . . Ashley is losing his head and becoming absurd.'⁴² Smith had little common feeling with the Northern Evangelicals, whom he despised, and the High Churchmen, whom he mocked; both groups strongly supported reform in the industrial districts.

The Northern campaign had completely disproved Parliamentary taunts that interfering humanitarians had no backing among operatives. Industrial conditions were again improving, and as the immediate incentive to militancy was removed, many Chartists again gave allegiance to the factory agitation. Again the Factory Movement looked hopefully to Westminster.

IV

Ashley told Graham on 17 April that he would propose that the Committee be directed to insert a '10 hours' clause for young persons, and next day gave notice in the Commons that he would propose a reduction to 11 hours from 1 October and to 10 hours from 1 October 1847. When the Second Reading came up on 22 April, Roebuck proposed his famous resolution against any interference with adults, and denied 'exaggerated descriptions of misery, want and suffering'. But the Bill passed to Committee from 26 April, when Philips, Bright and Hume bitterly complained of the Inspectors' increased powers; Hume, indeed, 'looked upon the whole Bill as a nullity and a disgrace to the country'. By 3 May, deciding that the phrasing of the Bill made amendments virtually impossible, Ashley decided to draw up a new ten hours clause. Ward, Roebuck and Captain Rous made him their 'direct and indirect target [and] fired at him without mercy'.⁴³

The main battle came on 10 May, during the Third Reading. Again Ashley was supported by a mixed group, including Howick, Bernal, Buller, Ferrand and Muntz; opponents included Graham, Liddell, G. Knight, Philips and Roebuck — whose speech, reported the factory delegates, was 'the most

vindictive and fiendish piece of oratory ever uttered in Parliament . . .'. Ashley concentrated on answering economic objections, on production, fixed capital, foreign competition and wages. But Graham declared that a reduction of 2 hours daily meant an annual loss of 6 weeks.⁴⁴ When the debate was resumed three days later, Macaulay, Russell, Milnes, Hawes, McGeachy, Shaw, John Stuart-Wortley and Pollington spoke for Ashley, and Bright, Ward, Manners Sutton and Labouchere against him. Milnes, dramatising his role as usual, told Guizot that he was too busy as 'an aide-de-camp of Ashley's' to visit Paris for Easter.⁴⁵ But in a two-hours' speech Peel announced that he would resign if Ashley succeeded. This threat was ruinous to reformers; despite suspicions, Peel remained to many Conservative Members, as Croker had declared in the previous autumn, 'the only statesman in whom the great Conservative body had any confidence, or could have any hope'. Ashley was defeated by 297 votes to 159, and the Bill was passed by 136 to 7.⁴⁶

The crushing majority was created by Government. 'Last night defeated', noted Ashley,

— utterly, singularly, prodigiously defeated by a majority of 138!! The House seemed aghast, perplexed, astonished. No one could say how, why and almost *when*. It seemed that 35 or 40 was the highest majority expected. Such is the power and such the exercise of Ministerial influence!!

But when he had recovered from the initial shock, he noted next day that

The majority was one to save the Government (even the Whigs being reluctant to turn them out just now), not against the question of Ten Hours. . . .

'*Ce résultat*', the Russian Ambassador, Baron Brunow, told Count Nesselrode, '*est uniquement dû à l'énergie morale que Sir Robert Peel a déployée en cette occasion.*' Despite Brougham's opposition, the Bill rapidly passed the Lords and received the Royal Assent on 6 June.⁴⁷

Reformers found some consolation: several leading Whigs had supported them and the hard core of Tory supporters had remained firm. Bright and Ashworth, two of the strongest

opponents, had declared that only the Corn Laws prevented Ten Hours legislation — an implied promise which they were not allowed to forget.⁴⁸ A large section of the Tory Press had maintained support. And Ashley himself considered that ⁴⁹

this great majority [was] far better for the question than one of, say 25. It proved that there was no division *against the principle*, but one to save the Ministry. It [would] beget, too, a high reaction. . . .

Contemporary observers agreed that party loyalty had defeated the amendment. 'This *volte face* occurred', wrote Engels, in his rather inaccurate account,⁵⁰

because the majority of the supporters of the Ten Hours Bill were Tories, who were prepared to sacrifice the Bill rather than see Government go out of office.

But Greville rejoiced at the 'extraordinary and unexpected majority', noting that

Nothing could exceed the universal astonishment, and many of their supporters grumbled much at having been compelled to vote with them or stay away, without any necessity. But they were wrong, for it was of great consequence to get such a majority as should put an end to the question, which this has done.

Ashley's supporters have been analysed as 61 Tories, 78 'Whigs' and 22 Irish Members. Sixty-one Members who supported Ashley on 18 March were absent from his lobby on 13 May; 10 changed to support Peel. There were 148 fresh voters on the Government side, including 110 Conservatives. The tardy Whig support for reform was important, but should not be exaggerated.⁵¹

V

Meanwhile, Ferrand had contrived to become the centre of another argument. His conflict with Graham over Mott's false reports on Keighley and Bolton came to a head in April; and on 22 April Roebuck, Ward and Hume raised his recent charges. French, Disraeli, Mannors and Smythe sought to defend Ferrand, Smythe ultimately challenging Roebuck to a duel.

But Ferrand refused to withdraw his allegations or to recognise the right of the House to judge the case. The Commons declared his charges 'unfounded and calumnious', but a large section of Tory opinion supported him; *The Times* was strongly in his favour.⁵² And he subsequently published evidence which appeared to convict Graham of procuring false reports with which to defeat him in the House; to *The Times* it proved that Graham⁵³

was either utterly indifferent to the truth, or so devoted to his special Commissioner as to be ludicrously blind to it.

On May Day 'Young England' joined Ferrand and Duncombe in defeating Miles' Master and Servant Bill, which was opposed by the trade unions. Twelve days later Oastler joined Joshua Scholefield, G. F. Muntz, Sturge, John Mason, Bull and three clergymen at an anti-Poor Law meeting in Birmingham Town Hall.⁵⁴ The closing of the Testimonial Fund thereafter compelled him to cease public work; and the last issue of the *Fleet Papers* appeared on 7 September. But if the Movement now lost its founder's services, Disraeli's *Coningsby* appeared to suggest that 'the New Generation' might take up the cause.

Whatever its shortcomings, Graham's Act effected several important improvements. Except in factories adopting 10 hours for young persons (in which case, children could be employed on three alternate days weekly for 10 hours), children were restricted to $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours (or 7 hours, if the lunch-break began at 1 p.m.); and this labour was to be performed in morning or afternoon, leaving a half day for education and recreation. Thus began the long history of the 'half-time system'. Children were to attend school for 3 hours daily, and the Inspectors were given the right to refuse recognition to unqualified teachers. Women were banned from nightwork and restricted to 12 hours. Enforcement powers were extended, meal-breaks and holidays provided and surgeons empowered to examine children's health. The Inspectors' powers to judge cases and issue orders were ended, but all of their staffs were now entitled to enter any factory at any time. Neither side raised any great opposition, in this time of extending trade.

Nevertheless, the usual crop of publications appeared during

1844. Engels, managing a family cotton firm in Manchester, was preparing to ⁵⁵

accuse the English bourgeoisie before the entire world of murder, robbery and all sorts of other crimes on a vast scale. . . .

William Rashleigh, Tory Member for East Cornwall and Ferrand's future brother-in-law, published Leach's attack on the Free Trade manufacturers and their system. John Beckwith produced a useful abstract of the new Act and of previous legislation, for the use of operatives. R. S. Hawker, the eccentric and saintly vicar of Morwenstow, who had helped Oastler in prison, dedicated verses to him on 'the Poor Man's Church'. Leon Faucher's description of Manchester's 'present condition and future prospects' provided a gloomy commentary on the cotton metropolis, where 'there was nothing but masters and operatives'.⁵⁶ And interest in social questions continued to extend. Ashley presided over the Ragged School Union and the Y.M.C.A.; he later noted that the latter and the drapers' 'Early Closing' groups 'both had their origin in the Ten Hours movement'.⁵⁷ With Southwood Smith he supported the 'Society for the Improvement of the Conditions of the Labouring Classes', one of several voluntary societies attempting to reform the dreadful conditions revealed by the Royal Commission on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts. An 'Association for Promoting Cleanliness among the Poor' built baths, and in December the great 'Health of Towns Association' started its career, with aristocratic and radical support.

But opponents of factory reform produced two important publications. Cooke Taylor optimistically surveyed industry, claiming that accidents were rare and the fault of the injured; allegations about industrial conditions often rested on the frauds of lifelong cripples, posing as hurt operatives. And Torrens told Ashley that under a Ten Hours Act

one of two events must ensue: — the manufactures of England will be transferred to foreign lands, or else the operatives must submit to a reduction of wages to the extent of 25 per cent.

It was a 'delusion' to think that wages could be maintained.⁵⁸ Thus the main props of the masters' old arguments were still retained.

VI

The factory agitation was increasingly affected by the Free Trade campaign. Long-standing opponents of industrial reform led the League; even Russell considered that,

Looking at the list of subscriptions and the names of the most active leaders, men will be apt to consider it as a move of the great manufacturers to increase their profits at the expense of the great landowners, who clutch their rents with a firm hand.

But to him, 'there was a principle involved, a true principle . . .'.⁵⁹ Conversely, many factory reformers and Chartists were strong Protectionists.

The Corn Law battle was fought with a bitterness which the League's ultimate triumph has tended to obscure. Although O'Connor was soundly beaten by Cobden in the famous Northampton debate in August, other Protectionists gave stouter resistance. Leach told Manchester Leaguers that machinery, not agricultural Protection, caused industrial depressions, and that Free Trade would cut wages; and John Campbell agreed. O'Brien lashed the League for aiming only at bourgeois advancement. But few Chartists could match the League in argument, and they often concentrated on breaking up its meetings. 'We were afraid to hold public meetings', one League official later recalled,⁶⁰

because they would come down in strength and move resolutions in favour of the Charter, protesting that they were as good repealers as we were, but the repeal of the Corn Laws was more of a manufacturer's question than a working man's, and taking this view a few Chartists unconsciously became Protectionists.

Many 'agricultural' Protectionists encouraged this Chartist view. Cayley condemned free traders for measuring the nation's well-being solely by trade statistics, and Almack, 'a backbone Tory', insisted that their 'principal object . . . was to increase their own gains by reducing wages'. When George Game Day quoted Almack's selection of League speeches, he reduced Bright to futile heckling.⁶¹ But, despite Cobden's definition of the League as 'a middle-class set of agitators', it used Chartist methods to silence such opponents. Dr. Sleigh

was regularly shouted down, while the League's rural lecturers, primed by Somerville, provoked agricultural crowds.

The Factory Movement was brought into the conflict both because its leaders were largely Protectionist and because its most prominent opponents were Free Traders. The League readily explained the disconcerting alliance between 'feudalism' and proletariat :

The itinerant lecturers of Chartism want money, the Monopolists want support from the masses ; each hopes to gain by a profitable exchange, but each dreads the power of the other to supply the pressing want.

To the League, the Ten Hours Bill was a 'Monopolist' attack on industry — but Ashley's success would aid the Free Trade cause, for ⁶²

The operatives, mulcted of a portion of their wages, and having had bitter experience of what 'short time' really means in the summer and autumn of 1841, will be animated by a firmer determination than ever to obtain the enfranchisement of industry and an adequate remuneration for labour. . . .

On 25 June Ferrand, the most prominent Protectionist factory reformer, countered Villiers by demanding an enquiry into the social effects of machinery. Eight days before, Peel had again threatened resignation, after a defeat in Committee on the Sugar Duties. Ferrand and 'Young England' opposed him, and Ashley protested at the threat.⁶³ Ferrand had become increasingly attached to Disraeli's group, staying with them at Bearwood in July. After Disraeli had praised the romantic progress of commerce at the Manchester Athenaeum, he and Manners visited Ferrand at Bingley in October. On 'the happiest moment of [Ferrand's] life', they attended the festive opening of workers' allotments. While Manners introduced round-arm bowling at village cricket matches — part of 'Young England's' scheme for the restoration of 'Merrie England' — Disraeli noted the local scenery, for use in his novels.⁶⁴

VII

Many committees remained in being after the passing of Graham's Act, although Oastler, living quietly at Headingley,

was no longer active. The *Fleet Papers* had greatly declined in circulation, and the last issues caused a printing debt of £100, which was paid by William Walker, Fielden and Wood. 'I do think [Oastler] ought not to be involved in debt at the outset of his attempt to gain a livelihood', Walker told Fielden, in November; he was 'now applying himself to business, and expected to make a livelihood'. But, despite the efforts of Ferrand, Underwood and Atkinson, Oastler's claim for £500 was never acknowledged by Thornhill's executors.⁶⁵

The Ten Hours men were active in various fields. In August 28 Rochdale workers, under Miles Ashworth, planned a co-operative shop, and in October formed the 'Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers'. Their first £1 of capital came from Fielden's employee, William Mallalieu, who became a trustee with Charles Howarth, a cotton warper who planned the rules and 'dividend'; both were Ten Hours supporters. Another member, James Standring, an Owenite flannel weaver, was secretary of the local committee; and the Radical Thomas Livesey, who supported the venture, also aided the reformers.⁶⁶ O'Connor meanwhile solicited trade union help for his Land Scheme of 'practical Chartism'. But the struggling craft unions, remembering bitter experience and attracted by prosperous times of higher employment, were reluctant to join such enterprises.

In September Ashley began another Northern tour. He stayed with Walker on 11 October and visited his Bradford mill:

Order, cleanliness, decency, comfort, reciprocal affections prevail . . . 500 children under 13 years of age, are receiving daily the benefits and blessings of a bringing up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

Next day Ashley spoke in the Exchange Buildings, with his Whig brother-in-law, W. F. Cowper, and William Rand, Walker, Scoresby, Morgan, Cooper and Balme. Later he visited Lancashire mills, meeting many masters and operatives, checking the 'distances' and addressing the Lancashire Committee; he found that 'the operatives, poor fellows, to a man, distrust this present prosperity . . .'.⁶⁷

On 7 November Ashley promised Fielden that
in a few days I shall write a letter to the Secretary of the S. Time Committee, to announce the re-opening of the question.

He asked Fielden to join Wood and himself in sending £10 each to Grant, who 'has rendered us real service and has, I fear, suffered a little in his business'. Ten days later he assured Lancashire reformers that he would promote a Bill as soon as possible.⁶⁸ 'Instructions have, I believe, been given for drawing up the Bill', Walker happily told Fielden, 'which his Lordship intends to introduce on the first day of the Session.' Grant was grateful for the financial aid, as his Liberal partner had left him. 'I have suffered much', he told Fielden,

in consequence of the interference of the Leaguers, ever since my name was made public by Mr. Bright in the House of Commons. . . .

He asked Ashley not to publicise his work; but, he added, to Fielden,⁶⁹

I am ever willing to work in this good cause, and I shall spare neither time nor exertion to promote it. I regret that so little has been done during the present autumn, but it is owing to the general exertions for an advance of wages, which has been partially obtained; but had the same efforts been made to advance the attaining of the Ten Hours Bill, it would have been more permanently advantageous to the hands.

In December Ashley faced contrary attacks from his father and the League. Duncombe told him that an agent was collecting information on the Shaftesbury estates for Cobden. But while the other Dorset Member, George Banks, earned popularity by his thoroughgoing Protectionism, local landowners disapproved of Ashley's attacks on low rural wages.⁷⁰ In the higher-wage area of the North Ferrand was restrained by no such worries, and lengthily attacked the Government before his constituents, accusing Graham of deliberate lying. 'England has become a nation of humbugs', he roared:

As Sir Robert Peel betrayed the Protestant Church in 1829, so he is going to betray the Protestant Church in Ireland in 1845. . . . I can have no confidence in a man who obtained office by fraud, and who dares to trample underfoot the best interests of the country.

The Times praised this 'good round circle of home-truths', as 'truth in a rough shape', and the *Morning Post* commented that

'we sadly lack in the House of Commons a score of Ferrands to call things by their right names'. Baines asserted that 'the honourable and foul-mouthed Member' was supported only by Chartists; and Cobden told London free traders that Ferrand was 'a slanderer and a —; he would not give them the other word'.⁷¹

Ferrand was the most outspoken Tory opponent of 'the most unconstitutional' Peel, but with him in feeling, if not yet vocally, was a large section of the party. 'There would be many a responding bosom among the Conservatives of the West Riding', claimed the *Halifax Guardian*: 'On the Poor Law and Ten Hours Bill questions, the Government had earned for themselves much disfavour.'⁷² Ferrand's supporters were not merely an agricultural pressure-group; they included the Short-Time men, the declining handworkers, the anti-Poor Law agitators and the Operative Conservatives, who often shared Ferrand's 'Orange' religious leanings. Such men hated the League on many counts. But their tragic weakness was the lack of united organisation; and their resources could never match the League's great funds. There was a vast potential Protectionist following, but few leaders linked the various groups. The Landed Interest was slow to act on its suspicions of Peel. And when, in December, Somerset House again ordered that able-bodied paupers 'should be relieved wholly in the workhouse', opponents could only make futile protests.

VIII

After the prosperity of 1844 — which, said O'Connor, 'left us scarcely a breath to fill our canvas' — the New Year opened tranquilly. Ashley was pessimistic, after

8 years of open support and suppressed antipathy from the Conservatives while in Opposition, 3 years of coldness and one of decided resistance from the same when in Government. . . .

He recorded, with his regular gloom,

I have lost every political and many private friends. The thing has entered into social life. The *Quarterly Review*, even, and Lockhart, are gone over to Peel. Except Fielden, Brotherton and Inglis, I am certain of no one in public. . . .

Government still hinted at an official post, but Ashley was determined to maintain the factory cause. By now Howick believed that only Free Trade could improve working-class conditions; he told Russell that Ashley shared their aim, but his measures were either 'altogether inadequate' or 'useless or worse than useless'.⁷³

But the North was stirring again. The cotton spinners still hoped for 'a more equitable adjustment or distribution of labour, by means of shortening the hours of labour'.⁷⁴ And in an open letter to Lancashire workers, Doherty pointed out that they would already have the ten hours, 'but for the personal interference of Sir Robert Peel', whom he condemned for not following his father's example. Doherty advised the committees to increase clerical support, firstly from Anglicans, most of whom were 'really good and humane men'. Dissenters — to whom they 'owed the defeat of certainly, as a whole, the best bill for the workers which had ever been brought forward by a Government, Whig or Tory' — should also be canvassed, along with Doherty's fellow Roman Catholics, whom he quite unwarrantably described as 'their warmest and staunchest friends'. Medical evidence should also be collected. Petitions would not convert Parliament, Doherty acknowledged; but they would prove that the operatives supported Ashley. He urged all Lancashire workers to prepare appeals.⁷⁵ Ferrand also remained active. On 9 January he spoke on the Poor Law at Rochdale, with Livesey, Fielden and Walter, setting off another controversy by attacking 'milk-and-water Conservatives' who supported the Act. In February he opposed Graham's new proposals and supported Duncombe's objections to the continued opening of correspondence.⁷⁶ Later in the Session he was again in the thick of heated argument.

Doherty's call did not go unheeded. On 2 March Lancashire delegates met in the Bolton Temperance Hotel, hoping for a Bill in the current Session;⁷⁷ and the Central Committee assembled regularly at Thomas Wilkinson's Red Lion Inn at Manchester. They were encouraged by the experience of Robert Gardner, who had adopted an 11 hours' day at Preston, without reducing production, and now planned a 10½ hours' day, 'without the slightest fear of suffering loss by it'. He explained that production was not 'an arithmetical question',

and his 700 workers claimed improvements in health, workmanship and earnings under the new system.⁷⁸ During the spring, Preston, Stockport and Bolton firms experimented with shorter hours; and, as reformers pointed out, Wood and Walker had long succeeded. 'But be the effect of the ten hours bill upon wages whatever it might', the Lancashire committee declared, 'the operatives would hail it as a boon to themselves and their children.' A Yorkshire agitation soon followed, as Balme challenged county patriotism:

Lancashire is all alive to this important movement. . . . Shall it be said that Yorkshire, which has hitherto taken so active a part in this question, shall fail in the hour of trial?

Success depended upon the operatives, and Balme called for 'numerous and numerously-signed petitions' from every area, recalling that only Peel's threats had prevented victory.⁷⁹ His Yorkshire committee now met weekly, in the New Inn at Bradford.

But Ashley was engaged with new legislation. On 18 February he proposed a Bill on calico-printing, dyeing, bleaching and calendering works, basing his case on the second Report of the Children's Employment Commission. The Bill prohibited nightwork for females and for boys under 13 and restricted children's hours to 8 (or 12 on three alternate days). Graham grudgingly assented to its introduction, but was disturbed by Ashley's resolve to continue his work until all child-workers had a chance of education. After the First Reading on 12 March, Graham collected information; and at the Second Reading on 2 April he opposed the regulation of dyeing, bleaching and calendering, while agreeing to prohibit nightwork and the employment of children under 8 in printworks. The Third Reading passed on 30 April, and the Royal Assent was given on 30 June.⁸⁰ The final Act was largely an extension of Graham's Act to printworks.

As the Factory Movement developed, Chartism endeavoured to regain its hold. O'Connor believed that the Land Scheme gave the only hope of 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's labour'. In April, after a London Convention, the 'Chartist Land Co-operative Society' was founded, to buy land for workers, thus 'making them independent of the grinding

capitalist'.⁸¹ But many Chartists opposed the scheme, the socialistic O'Brien particularly fearing the conservatism of the new owners.

In April Parliamentary energies were occupied in bitter debates over Peel's increased grant to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth. A strong 'No Popery' agitation was created by Evangelicals and dissenters, including all the Bradford 'Ten Hours' clergy and Ferrand's Irish friends, who petitioned for Peel's impeachment. Ferrand vehemently opposed the 'Popish Bill' and its author — 'the greatest traitor . . . since Judas Iscariot'; Peel had 'deserted the principles of his party', and Ferrand 'implored him no longer to drag his Conservative Party through the kennel of apostasy'. Early on 19 April 158 Conservatives supported Peel and 145 opposed him. Thomas Raikes thought that the opposition was primarily caused by Peel's tampering with Protection, and Greville considered Peel 'a reformer and more of a Whig than a Tory'. After the Government succeeded with a majority of 147 largely Whig votes, Greville observed that, 'Everybody knows that the Tory Party has ceased to exist as a party. . . .' ⁸²

Oastler had urged 'Young England', in 1844, to turn to social problems, 'as well as make fine speeches and quote the classics'. Disraeli's *Sybil*, the most readable of all descriptions of the Two Nations, gave the answer in May, with its call to youth not to be indifferent to 'the suffering millions'. The novel's geographic settings were largely based on the magnificent scenery of the Ferrand estate, while much of the thought and language was 'Oastlerite'. G. C. Lewis was horrified at such a 'compound . . . of the doctrines of the Catholic Church of the middle ages and the principles of the modern Communists'. Engels was more charitable: while the 'Merrie England' ideals were 'unattainable' and 'ridiculous', Disraeli's group

had courage and . . . good intentions. They opposed the present disgusting state of affairs and they exposed existing prejudices. And that was something to be thankful for.

In 1848 Marx and Engels defined this 'feudal socialism' as ⁸³

half lamentation, half lampoon, half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism,

striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core, but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

Despite contemporary jibes about their 'medieval' ideas, several members of the already disintegrating group played an important part in factory reform.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

VICTORY

As the spring of 1845 passed, restive Northern reformers complained of the failure to introduce another Factory Bill. 'It is not their intention, but they are monstrously unjust', thought the harassed Ashley. To remedy the situation, Henry Green and Balme summoned a joint conference, explaining that 'the introduction of the measure into Parliament this session is surrounded with numerous difficulties'. On Sunday, 8 June, 32 delegates from the Lancashire Central Committee, two Bolton committees, the Manchester fine spinners and coarse spinners, Bury, Chorley, Preston, Oldham, Lees, Rochdale, Chowbent, Astley Bridge, Todmorden, Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Keighley and Dewsbury assembled in the York Hotel at Todmorden, under Samuel Howarth of Bolton; Glasgow reformers sent a message of support. Pitman of Bradford called for the introduction of a Bill during the Session, but Joseph Gregory of Bolton declared this to be impossible, and the conference finally supported Ashley's postponement. Paul Hargreaves of the Central Committee reported that Preston and Bolton firms had operated an 11 hours' day without reducing wages, and similar accounts were given by Huddersfield, Preston and Bolton delegates. Mills of Oldham thought the meeting the best he had attended in fourteen years as a Ten Hours man; the general mood was optimistic, though the Rochdale delegate declared that his mill worked 14 hours. The reformers thanked the three-quarters of the Members for manufacturing divisions who now supported them, and *The Times*, *Standard*, *Post*, *Herald* and *Northern Star*; and they called for a massive campaign of petitioning.¹ The energetic Balme gained the aid of Cowper, Milnes, Grey, Howick and Palmerston in presenting Yorkshire petitions.²

In July Oastler's wife, Mary, died, and shortly afterwards he sadly moved to Fulham, to work for a London stockbroker.³

He had taken no part in the new agitation, and was now absent as it developed. Consequently, the new Movement was primarily planned by Balme and Green; and from this time delegate conferences were summoned to discuss almost every problem, and a more 'permanent' organisation developed, as the two central committees took offices in Bradford and Manchester. But the Movement still faced the danger of a schism, because of the delay in promoting a new Bill. On 4 September Bolton operatives, assembled in the Temperance Hall under the weaver William Beard, resolved to ask local employers to reduce hours, as the Ten Hours Bill had failed. They thanked Robert Knowles, who had adopted an 11 hours' day, and urged other masters to follow his lead. Peter Ainsworth, a local M.P., supported this move, while Howarth, Gregory and one Joseph Mullineaux thanked Ashley and hoped that he would succeed in the next Session.⁴ This policy of local 'self-help' obviously contained dangers. Consequently, in October Ashley made another Northern tour, to reassure reformers. At Manchester on 14 October he 'met a delegation of operatives; heartily received; all went off well; plenty of zeal and "no surrender" . . .'. Three days later he told a Bradford meeting that all classes were now more sympathetic and that the Movement had been the parent of other great social agitations. Further meetings soon followed.⁵

On 1 November another delegate meeting was held in Manchester, under John Fenton of Bury, to arrange an intensive campaign. Glasgow, Bradford, Manchester, Bolton, Hyde, Bury, Oldham, Waterhead Mills, Lees, Preston, Dukinfield, Stockport, Chorley, Cuerden, Heywood, Rochdale, Wheelton and Newton committees were represented. The Lancashire committee presented its plan to raise £500, hire offices, appoint a full-time secretary and organise petitions from mills, clergymen, medical practitioners and millowners — and to memorialise rural Members, 'praying them not to prevent the manufacturing Members from improving the condition of their own workpeople'.⁶ Green announced these schemes to Lancashire operatives and advertised for a secretary able to prepare petitions, keep accounts and speak in public; on 24 November Mullineaux was appointed. The Central Committee also prepared a 56-page pamphlet, quoting Fielden's paper of 1836,

Kenworthy's tract of 1842, Gardner's letter of 1845 and an essay by a tradesman exposing opponents' 'fallacies', to aid reformers in the 'final struggle'.⁷

But as the Movement prepared for another Parliamentary campaign, other controversies also heightened. The long debates over the notorious Andover workhouse began in August. Chartist arguments raged over O'Connor, who, disappointed at union hostility, now condemned 'the pompous trades and proud mechanics'. And League activity had been mounting since the May bazaar. Through the wet autumn agents objected to Protectionist votes and created Free Trade franchises, especially in the West Riding and South Lancashire. In December a £250,000 fund was opened for an even greater campaign in 1846.⁸

The tragic news from Ireland, where the failure of the potato crop was reported to have caused starvation, caused many conversions to Free Trade. Ashley announced, in October, that he could no longer support the Corn Laws, and in November Morpeth pledged his support for the League, while Russell's famous letter from Edinburgh called for repeal, thus causing 'dismay' to Tories and 'extreme confusion' in the Government, reported Le Marchant.⁹ In the Cabinet Peel tried to convert his colleagues — in 'a damned fright' over 'rotten potatoes', noted Wellington. On 4 December *The Times* prematurely announced that the Government was resolved on repeal; and Greville found

political affairs in a state of the greatest interest and excitement. The whole town had been electrified. . . .

Lord Grey thought it ¹⁰

impossible in the actual state of the country, the corn law could be maintained — but thought for decency's sake Peel would not, as *minister*, have proposed the change. However, he rejoiced beyond measure that he did. . . .

But Peel resigned, as a tense public learned on 11 December, and Russell was summoned to Osborne.

The factory reformers' hopes rose with 'the probable accession . . . to power' of the first Prime Minister pledged to reform.¹¹ But Whigs generally were not prepared to form the repealing Ministry. Melbourne, indeed, held that the potato

failure was 'much exaggerated' and the corn shortage 'entirely false and unfounded'; he told Russell that

if Peel had proposed the repeal of the Corn Law, he would only have pointed out the inconsistency and, in him, the dishonesty, of such conduct.

But Russell returned 'the poisoned chalice' to Peel. 'It is good for you and for all to be out of the mess this time, on any terms', Lord Lansdowne told him.¹²

Although O'Connor's Manchester Convention followed Peel, other Protectionists were roused to fury; 'the indignation of the party is intense and the surprise of the general public unbounded', James Stuart-Wortley told his mother.¹³ At Knaresborough on 23 December Ferrand assailed Peel as 'a slippery eel' who

had been guilty of the grossest tergiversation and basest apostasy, and had broken every pledge he gave in his Tamworth Manifesto.

He bitterly revived his old attacks:

Mr. Cobden the other day said that he would back Stockport against Steyning. Good God, gentlemen, if the League are so mad as to attempt to come to blows, the forces which they could muster would speedily be annihilated by the brawny arms of the agriculturalists.

Ferrand still called for comprehensive Protection. And the Right believed, with Manners, that 'the famine was wicked moonshine'.¹⁴ At last the Protectionists were roused to action; but Peel forbade Ministers to attend their meetings, and the League had already organised a new electorate 'by the avowed fabrication of a hundred thousand fictitious votes', according to the *Quarterly Review*.¹⁵

Amid this high political excitement, the Ten Hours men started their campaign with a 'very numerous attended' Rochdale rally on 11 December, addressed by Leach. Four days later a Heywood meeting resolved to ask both local masters and Parliament for Ten Hours. Ashley promised Balme that he would give notice of the Bill on 'the very first night' possible; and Balme called for petitions, again pointing to Lancashire and hoping that Yorkshire would¹⁶

not be found wanting or wearied at this time, when another and, we trust, successful effort is about to be made.

He circulated special petitions for operatives and Sunday school teachers, and Ferrand immediately pledged his support. The Movement was supported by the Anglican clergy in almost every textile town. Current wealth and industrial activity were 'only accumulating materials for a more deadly explosion', Phillpotts characteristically told his clergy.¹⁷

But the factory campaign was overshadowed by the Corn Law crisis. In many Northern eyes, the two causes remained poles apart. 'The unhappy crowds who cheer the claptrap of the League-paid lecturers', declared the *Stockport Advertiser*,¹⁸

will find too late that free trade in corn will make free trade in labour. . . . Those thousands paraded so boldly are not *gifts* — they are investments.

I

On New Year's Day 1846 Mullineaux urgently called for petitions and the formation of new committees, which Lancashire delegates planned on 24 January. Leach roused Warrington and Fielden Oldham; and Balme organised Huddersfield, Halifax, Keighley, Bradford, Leeds and Dewsbury meetings. But opposition had not diminished. At Bath Tremeneere met Bright and Cobden, who told him that Factory Inspectors would ruin industry, pamper the operatives and cause mischief; he¹⁹

thought it a great breach of good manners to introduce such a subject, in such violent terms, at a dinner table; but they evidently had no such suspicion.

Successful experiments with reduced hours were regularly quoted, but the hard core of opponents remained adamant. 'Much rests with the employers', commented the *Stockport Advertiser*,

but although many of these are the veriest liberals in the political sense, yet they exercise a terrible tyranny in their own establishments. . . . The real arbiters are the public.

Beckett Denison supported the reformers,²⁰ but Morpeth was reticent.

The League's work in the West Riding was now to be tested. When John Stuart-Wortley succeeded his father as 2nd

Lord Wharnccliffe, Morpeth was adopted for the by-election; he issued a policy on Boxing Day, advocating repeal. Ferrand then started a Protectionist campaign for Edwin Lascelles. 'Conservatism in the West Riding is as dead as Whiggery', he proclaimed:

Fellow countrymen, this is glorious news. From this time forth, let the 'thimble-rigging' word Conservative be struck out of the political vocabulary; it was coined to take in a nation, it has already destroyed a party.

From Paris, he promised 'to fight the battle of Labour against Capital', calling for

Protection for our Protestant Religion . . . the Monarchy . . . the Peerage . . . the Aristocracy . . . the Landowners . . . Agriculture . . . the farmer . . . the farm labourer . . . the home trade . . . the manufacturing operative's labour . . .

— and for the Ten Hours Bill, an anti-Truck Act and reform of the Poor Law: 'in short . . . Protection for all, destruction to none'. He still insisted that the League hoped 'to reduce wages to the Continental level, and thus to increase the profits of Capital by screwing down the price of Labour'. And he asked, 'dare the League meet the operatives in any manufacturing town and publicly discuss the question of free trade?' The Operative Conservatives supported him.²¹ But Lascelles declined nomination, and Protectionists turned to George Lane-Fox instead. When Ferrand spoke in Leeds Music Hall on 28 January, Leaguers noisily heckled his speech on Truck and Free Trade. 'You are a most shabby set', he told them: 'the working men conduct themselves like gentlemen, and the master manufacturers like blackguards.' Next day he faced an equally divided audience at the Bradford Oddfellows' Hall, and on 30 January, at the Huddersfield Philosophical Hall, he was assaulted by League supporters and luckily rescued by a group of 'Ten Hours' operatives.²²

While this riotous campaign proceeded, Balme asked for Morpeth's views; he visited Castle Howard, while a meeting under Morgan sent a memorandum. Morpeth promised 'sympathy', but

must reserve to himself entire freedom to deal with the propositions which might be submitted for adoption; but [he] would

bring to their consideration a keen feeling for the wants and wishes of the Working Classes, a resolute determination to do his duty towards them.

Balme's attempts to obtain more specific pledges only gained Morpeth's advice to look to actions rather than 'mere verbal professions'.²³ The Yorkshire committee issued its own election address:

If any have made a party use of this holy cause, we are not of this number. We have at all times carefully avoided the mixing up of the Ten Hours Bill with party politics or interested contentions. The Landed Interest, now that they are in peril, would probably take up our cause. When, however, they were strong, they never heartily aided us. They took the lure which the New Poor Law offered them to transport their 'Surplus Poor' and their Families to the regions of 'White Slavery', and it concerned them little to amend the Factory System before they consigned the Children of their poor dependants to its destructive effects.

Oaster's warnings were now coming true. 'It can never be too often repeated', declared the *Halifax Guardian*,²⁴

that in the repeal of the Corn Laws there is a full retribution for the repeal of the old Poor Law. The 'protection' which the landlords and farmers then refused to the labouring classes is now refused by the people of England to *them*.

After Ferrand's courageous campaign, Lane-Fox wisely withdrew, on 'health' grounds, and Morpeth was returned unopposed in February.

II

Despite the impending Corn Law debates, the Yorkshire reformers mounted their campaign: Balme's central committee asked for donations and petitions²⁵

to strengthen Lord Ashley's hands and show the Members of both Houses of Parliament that the people of this vast and influential Riding will never rest satisfied until the Ten Hours Bill becomes the law of the land.

And on 29 January Ashley moved for leave to reintroduce his Bill, claiming that the experience of Gardner, Knowles, Horrocks and others proved that it could be operated 'without

injury to the manufacturers and without a serious diminution of the wages of labour'. But such voluntary actions appeared to Graham 'a conclusive argument against calling on the Government to interpose', and he advised the House to postpone its decision until after the Corn Law debates. Hume condemned all such legislation as 'an invasion of the property of the master', and looked for the repeal of 'the whole system'. Bright and Roebuck also opposed Ashley, while Fielden, Wakley and Manners supported him. 'Most awfully reviled by Messrs. Bright, Trelawney, Roebuck and Escott, of which I took no notice, except to clear away a misstatement by the belligerent Quaker . . .', recorded Ashley.²⁶ But practical experience did have some influence. 'Persons who are not obliged to work so long', wrote William Thornton,²⁷

may work harder than before, and may get through the same quantity of work in a short time as formerly occupied them for a longer period. If so, the limitation of labour to 10 hours daily would not in any circumstances reduce wages, and at all events the reduction might be either prevented or nullified by the establishment of free trade in food.

Peel announced his Free Trade proposals during January, and the Protectionists declared their hostility during the debate on the Address. Echoing Ferrand, Sibthorp 'was neither surprised nor deceived' by Peel, by whom

he had so often been deceived . . . on important questions of religion as well as agriculture, that he was determined to be deceived no more.

Bankes urged Parliament to remember the distress of the handloom weavers and framework knitters. But after Peel had detailed his policy on 27 January, Ashley agreed with him and decided that he must resign his seat, after proposing the Ten Hours Bill. He announced this decision to a group of reformers, and was ²⁸

much touched by the honest and virtuous sincerity of Fielden, Wood and Philip Grant. They are, if any men be, deeply anxious and deeply interested that I should remain a Member of Parliament, yet they did not hesitate for an instant. Moved almost to tears they were, while they applauded my decision and hoped and believed that it would prove, eventually, the best.

The central committees addressed the Dorsetshire electors on the coming by-election — an ‘excellent and . . . most gratifying’ act to Ashley. John Fielden was chosen as Parliamentary leader, at a meeting of delegates and M.P.s in London, and the decision was soon confirmed by the committees.²⁹ Like most of the ‘free-trade’ Conservatives who sought re-election, Ashley was defeated; and so Fielden took charge of the Bill.

The Parliamentary storm started during February. Ferrand was soon involved in controversies with Lord Northland, Ward and the ‘Peelites’. During the debate on Miles’ motion on 24 February, he declared that League petitions were fraudulently obtained and attacked Members who deserted their Protectionist promises: ‘the people viewed with unmitigated disgust [Peel’s] contemptible apostasy and tergiversation’. Ferrand was

in favour of machinery so long as it was subservient to manual labour, but the moment it superseded manual labour, he thought, with the late Sir Robert Peel, that it became the bitterest curse of the country.

He again attacked the Poor Law’s ‘cold-blooded cruelty’ and Ashworth, the ‘trafficker in white slaves’; and he urged agriculturalists not to ‘hand over agricultural labourers . . . that a few cotton lords might grow richer’. As the Corn Importation Bill would reduce cultivation and drive rural workers into industry, he quoted Leach and others on the conditions which they would find in the North. As usual, Ferrand’s personal attacks provoked heated arguments, particularly with Roebuck and Bright. Disraeli’s subsequent defence of Ferrand led to Peel’s famous reconciliation with Cobden.³⁰

On 6 March Ferrand strongly supported the motion for an enquiry into the Andover workhouse, along with Inglis, Duncombe, Fielden, Sibthorp, Johnson, Aglionby and Pollington. While such sallies had little effect on Parliament, they further publicised the Northern agitation. *The Times* did not approve of the whole of Ferrand’s philosophy, but found him consistent:

He desired to see the labourer protected at the plough, the stockinger at his frame, the weaver at his loom. . . . As far as they went, he agreed with the Conservative leaders. With them he demanded protection for the soil, though he went further and asked it for the tiller thereof. . . .

And Ferrand's condemnation of industrial migration ³¹

led from political economy to still profounder social and moral considerations. . . . The State had still to take the great towns in hand, and devise more positive measures for their better security from the evils incident from accumulated numbers, poverty, improvidence and sin. They wanted a sound and vigorous system of municipal economy.

III

As Parliament began its bitter debates, the Factory Movement raised support for Fielden. Gardner's workers denied Bright's lie that their hours had not been reduced. Most Bolton mills and eleven Ashton mills prepared petitions; and Heywood reformers obtained support from several manufacturers. The Preston committee organised a meeting of clergy, under the vicar — and petitions were got up among physicians and most of the dissenting ministers, who were new and rare supporters.³² In addition, the two North Lancashire Members were asked for help; but Patten had not yet decided his attitude, while Talbot Clifton favoured the Bill but reserved his final decision. Stalybridge operatives met in the 'Forester's Refuge' on 24 February, to hear Leach and Pilling. And other meetings were held throughout the cotton districts, while deputations successfully solicited shorter hours from several masters. But opposition was far from being stilled. Ashton masters and Liberal papers publicised a letter from Hume to a Kirkcaldy master condemning all interference; and the vicar of Preston's speeches were reported to have 'given much offence to many of the cotton spinners in the town'.³³

The campaign was strengthened early in March by the arrival of Ashley. Indeed, most of the old supporters were again active, although John Wood was not sorry at his inability to take part,³⁴

as it appeared to him improbable that any decided benefit could result from an appeal to the public in those districts at the very time that the important measure now before Parliament was engrossing the general attention.

Ashley addressed a 'large and crowded meeting' in Manchester Town Hall on Monday, 2 March and moved next day to

Preston, finding it 'hard work'; he visited Gardner's mill and spoke in the Theatre. On Wednesday he dined with Thomas Fielden and spoke at Ashton with Thomas Mellor, a local master. Thursday was spent in inspecting an asylum and speaking in Bolton Temperance Hall with Ainsworth. Next day Ashley spoke in Oldham, before crossing into Yorkshire on 7 March. He was supported in Lancashire by a large number of clergymen. Wray presided at Manchester; the vicar, J. Owen Parr, and four other priests spoke at Preston, and five priests spoke at Bolton.

After spending the week-end with William Walker, Ashley resumed his energetic tour by addressing a large Bradford rally in the Oddfellows' Hall on 9 March, again supported by local clergy. On Tuesday he visited Halifax, on Wednesday spoke in the Huddersfield Philosophical Hall and on Thursday in Leeds Music Hall. Oastler, O'Connor, Fielden and Ferrand could not visit Leeds, but Hook, the chairman, again asserted his support:

I am ready in this righteous cause to press forward to the last gasp, and if a collision should occur between your interests and the interests of a higher social class, you may depend upon finding me on your side.

Next day Ashley returned home, after a very successful tour. Each meeting had resolved that

the Factory Workers . . . were quite prepared to accept the Ten Hours Bill, leaving the price of labour to be regulated by supply and demand.

Numerous petitions had been prepared, and Ashley's step-father-in-law, Palmerston, was among Members who agreed to present them. And twelve delegates, including Amos Wilson of Preston, John Brewer of Bolton and William Arrowsmith of Manchester, were sent to London.³⁵

But the campaign was in vain. Fielden had hoped to move the Second Reading on 25 March, but the debate was postponed for a month and the delegates returned North. The Commons continued discussion of Peel's proposals. The Corn Bill passed its Second Reading on 27 February, by 337 votes to 240, and the Third Reading on 15 May, by 327 to 229.³⁶ During the debates the 231 Tory Protectionists found a new leader in the

sporting Lord George Bentinck. Supporting him were such Ten Hours supporters as Bankes, John Bennet, Borthwick, Musgrave Brisco, Cayley, Lord Chelsea, Beckett Denison, Disraeli, Ferrand, Sir Henry Halford, Gilbert Heathcote, J. W. Henley, Inglis, Andrew Lawson, Manners, Philip and William Miles, Stafford O'Brien, Lords Ossulston and Pollington, Philip Pusey, Rashleigh, Sibthorp, John Tollemache and C. N. Newdegate. But the reformers were sharply divided: among Peel's supporters were Aglionby, Ainsworth, Beckett, Brocklehurst, Buller, Crawford, Fielden, Grimsditch, Hindley, Hornby, Jocelyn, Johnson, Milnes and Strickland.

As Peel's plan for the gradual abolition of the Corn Laws triumphed over the alternatives, the free traders showed some reluctance to honour 'pledges' to support factory reform. Robert Greg, who agreed to a reduction of hours in March, opposed it in April. And Ashley regretted that some operatives had inopportunistically 'yielded to the intrigues of Mr. Hindley' for 11 hours legislation.³⁷ Nevertheless, 47 committee delegates rallied at the Old Swan Inn in Manchester on 19 April, to plan future tactics. They represented the central group, three Manchester committees, two committees each at Bolton, Hindley and Oldham, and Rochdale, Ashton, Preston, Chorley, Farington, Bury, Blackburn, Hadfield,⁸ Samlesbury, Heywood, Todmorden, Lees, Waterhead Mill, Saddleworth, Woodley, Macclesfield, Littleborough, Warrington, Bacup, Wigan and Chowbent. This most representative conference established a new Lancashire committee, consisting of Paul Hargreaves, George Johnson, Thomas Mawdsley, Henry Green, James Smith, Thomas Ashworth and George Wood, with powers of co-option; each was to receive 1s. for every meeting attended. Delegates were to be sent to London, under orders to keep clear of all other controversies and to report daily to the central group and twice weekly to their committees.³⁸

The Lancashire committee sent six delegates, and eight others were elected by the Oldham, Ashton, Rochdale, Leeds and Bradford committees. In London they worked in pairs, canvassing Members. They soon reported that Graham was 'as determined as ever . . . to bring the whole power of the Government to bear against them', but they had 'considerable success' with others.³⁹ From the North poured supporting

petitions; Fielden alone presented 26, including one from the Dundee Free Church Presbytery, which provoked protests from local masters. The ministers replied that mill-girls' ⁴⁰

want of that home education which forms the future housewife and mother . . . is at the root of most of the social evils of Dundee; and what, but more time at home, can provide the cure?

This stand by the ministers, who 'would much rather incur the displeasure of the millowners than abandon their duty as ministers of religion', needed some courage, for many masters were in their congregations. Altogether, some 230,000 signatures were collected in Fielden's support.

On 29 April Fielden moved the Second Reading, stressing the strong religious support and the practical considerations which he, as an employer of 3000 operatives, knew well. He recalled that

no Factory Bill was ever yet passed without the House being stunned with predictions of the ruin that would ensue to manufacturers; and all these predictions have been falsified by experiment.

Seconding him, Ainsworth appealed at least for 11 hours. Ashley fretted in the lobby: 'many things will be started in debate which no one can refute but myself. Alas! Alas!' Hume maintained that the Bill 'would ultimately ruin the best interests of the country . . . there ought to be no compromise upon it'. And Graham announced the Government's 'firm determination to resist'. Ashley was angry: ⁴¹

Heartless and dishonest men! The whole debate proceeded and will proceed on a lie; on the lie that the Bill is directed to control the labour of grown men!

But his complaint was not completely justified; in most cases, the Bill would restrict men to the hours worked by young persons. And such an infringement of individual 'rights' still shocked many in the House, while speculations about foreign competition also carried considerable weight. Such views were expressed by Lancashire masters, meeting in Manchester under Greg, and their allies warned operatives of substantial wage reductions. Reformers doubted such assertions and stressed the benefits of 'spreading' labour.⁴² They believed that they had a 'considerable majority' in the House.

The debate was postponed until 13 May, and Brewer's delegates intensified their canvassing, quoting the old views of R. H. Greg and Henry Ashworth that only the Corn Laws prevented reform, and pointing out that the operatives had agreed to leave wages 'to be regulated and arranged by them and their employers'.⁴³ In the resumed debate J. C. Colquhoun, Cowper, Inglis, Crawford and Brotherton spoke for the Bill, as did Manners, whose speech was reprinted for the North. Labouchere, Dennistoun of Glasgow, Trelawney and Roebuck spoke in opposition, and Edward Cardwell of Clitheroe, secretary to the Treasury, was put up to speak to postpone a division. Hardy explained to the Bradford committee that,⁴⁴

I very much regret that the state of my health will not permit me to attend to support the Second Reading. . . . I most sincerely wish success to it.

The delegates maintained that the Bill would have passed on a vote, but they were now less optimistic, 'the whole power of the Government being arrayed against them'. They urged Northern operatives to ignore strike calls, and resumed canvassing for the debate on 22 May. Two days before then, Duncombe's Bill on Lace Factories, which involved restricting men's hours, was defeated by 151 votes to 66.⁴⁵

Party divisions again provided interesting contrasts during the third discussion. The Protectionists Bankes, Bentinck and Beckett Denison, with the Whigs Macaulay and Russell, supported the Bill, while opponents included Ward, Morpeth, Peel and Cobden — who complained of reformers' hostility to the League. Bright prophesied 'an extraordinary delusion and . . . a fatal disappointment', but in a famous speech Macaulay asked for a *via media* between 'a paternal government, that is to say, a prying, meddlesome government . . . [and] a careless, lounging government'. He held that 'where public health . . . [and] public morality is concerned, the State may be justified in regulating even the contracts of adults'; he believed that,

If ever we are forced to yield the foremost place among commercial nations, we shall yield it, not to a race of degenerate dwarfs, but to some people pre-eminently vigorous in body and in mind.

But, like other Whig supporters, Macaulay favoured 11 hours. Fielden lost by 203 votes to 193.⁴⁶

The narrow defeat encouraged reformers, who closely analysed the division lists. Ashley thanked Russell for his support — 'a good work and worthy of his public and private station'. But the extent of Whig support, even in 1846, has sometimes been exaggerated; and even Colquhoun preferred 11 hours. Grant estimated that supporters, including tellers, consisted of 117 Protectionists, 7 Peelites and 71 'Whigs'; opponents were 51 Protectionists, 73 Peelites and 81 'Whigs'. There were 18 pairs, and supporters in 1844 who were now absent numbered 20 'Whigs', 11 Peelites and 15 Protectionists. Six Peelites who supported Ashley in 1844 now opposed the Bill, and one was paired against it; one Protectionist and one 'Whig' had also changed sides. 'The Whigs generally opposed it', declared the *Stockport Advertiser*, 'but their arguments do not appear to have told as might have been expected.' Cobden, the local Member, had 'fought the battle against the Bill, as Mr. Fielden fought the battle for it'. Reformers were particularly incensed at Cobden's hostility. When Brewer's delegates held a final meeting in their Strand headquarters, Howarth of Bolton bitterly condemned Cobden's 'wicked and untrue' speech, and Arrowsmith said that Cobden 'had held out the hope that if the Corn Laws were repealed the Ten Hours Bill would follow' and had even offered to become the patron of a Ten Hours Society.⁴⁷

Generally, reformers were hopeful. 'Although not a victory, it is the next thing to one', Ashley told the Lancashire committee. He had never been more optimistic, and urged operatives to 'redouble their efforts' for their 'great and undeniable right'. Mullineaux claimed that the division proved that 'all hope of further successful resistance . . . was at an end', and told the committees that

The prevailing opinion is that Sir Robert Peel's Government cannot survive another Session of Parliament; and upon a close examination of the division it will be found that it is quite out of the power of any party in the state to form a government without having amongst its members a considerable number of influential supporters of the claims of the factory operatives.

The London delegates had been assured that 'the success of the measure was no longer a matter of doubt, but merely a question of time'.⁴⁸ On Sunday, 14 June, Lancashire delegates

met in Mullineaux's headquarters in the Old Swan Inn at Manchester. They planned a campaign on traditional lines and a fund of £1000 — the sum which Akroyd donated at a single League meeting. Twelve days later, the Royal Assent was given to the repeal of the Corn Laws, and on the same day the Government was defeated on the Irish Coercion Bill. Lord John Russell now became the first Prime Minister pledged to support factory reform.

IV

In the summer of 1846 Northern celebrations followed the success of the League, which was dissolved on 2 July. Ferrand still pursued Graham over the Andover case and the 'foul and infamous conspiracy upon the part of Sir J. Graham and Mr. G. Lewis to crush him in the House of Commons', in the Mott affair. In the sympathetic *Times* he accused Lewis of 'a most deliberate falsehood'.⁴⁹ Recent enquiries had certainly vindicated some of Ferrand's charges against Graham and the Poor Law; even Brougham complained that the Commissioners had acted illegally in not meeting as a body. But the attack on Lewis was to end in a libel case. Meanwhile, O'Connor happily inaugurated the new millennium by the purchase of O'Connorville, the first Chartist estate, near Watford.

Both sides prepared for the resumption of the factory struggle. The Tory Henry Edwards, a substantial contributor to the Halifax committee, adopted the 10 hours' day, and the Marshalls reduced working hours to 11, with 9 on Saturday. But Halifax Liberals, under the Akroyds, only offered 11 hours with proportionate wage cuts, and prepared documents for their workers appealing for the retention of the 69 hours' week 'with the present rate of wages'.⁵⁰ The cotton spinners, the wealthiest reformist group, could not raise the £1000 fund unaided, and in August Todmorden and Rochdale reformers, Bolton weavers and strippers and Bury and Blackburn weavers met to plan local campaigns and raise funds. In addition, each committee pledged support for the Lancashire committee's new weekly journal, *The Ten Hours' Advocate and Journal of Literature and Art*, which appeared on 26 September, with Grant as editor; its agents were Heywood of Manchester and Mann of Leeds.

The campaign gathered force in the autumn. During September the Heywood, Macclesfield, Preston and Leigh committees were reorganised, and a Padiham committee was formed in October by Robert Cooper, secretary of the Weavers' Association. The Halifax men produced a spirited reply to the local masters, 'the monopolists of Time', claiming that their document was 'proof undeniable that the 12 hour system could no longer be enforced without [the workers'] consent' and was a 'trap' to defeat Fielden: ⁵¹

Time for Labour may be fixed, wages cannot. Your masters' object is to gain money, yours is to gain time. You have no ground for fear, if you only stay your hands from signing. . . .

The benefits of curtailing women's labour were prominently advertised. Stockport workers regularly called for the cessation of female work during times of male unemployment. At Bradford Scoresby formed a 'Society for Bettering the Condition of Female Factory Operatives'; but, as its policies did not include shorter hours, Ashley refused his aid. Morpeth supported Scoresby and came under the lash of the reformers. His advocacy of public parks, at a Manchester Athenaeum meeting with Archbishop Whateley, was contrasted with his opposition to Fielden's Bill; to Grant, he was 'liberal in theory, but despotic in practice'. In reply to a Bradford address, Morpeth told Balme, ⁵²

I have to express my regret that I have not found myself at liberty to comply with what it requires from me; a regret I do not feel the less, notwithstanding the very uncivil and intolerant tone in which the committee have thought it fit to convey their sentiments.

Relations between Morpeth and the Yorkshire reformers had deteriorated since his vague expressions of sympathy during the January by-election.

Ashley and Oastler both encouraged the new campaign. Arguments on foreign competition had been destroyed by repeal of the Corn Laws, claimed Ashley. The most dangerous enemies now were the 11 hours compromisers, wrote Oastler, who called for a massive campaign and the recruitment of more masters. ⁵³ Bright and other Northern politicians were constantly questioned. When Bowring made his annual Bolton visit on 21 October and spoke on education, James Ryder and

local reformers demonstrated for the Bill, which alone would give time for schooling; it was 'bare-faced hypocrisy' to preach philanthropy and oppose reform. Bowring retorted that reduced hours could be obtained voluntarily, and his friend P. R. Arrowsmith declared that the workers were wrong over factory reform as on Free Trade. After some 'tumult', a Ten Hours resolution was carried, with only three dissentients — Arrowsmith, John Dean and Edmund Ashworth, all cotton masters.⁵⁴

Yorkshire delegates planned their campaign at the Railway Hotel, Brighouse, on 26 October, under a new county chairman, John Rawson, a Bradford manufacturer. They resolved to invite Oastler and Fielden to address their meetings. The two leaders gladly accepted, and Grant welcomed Oastler's return:

In his hands our cause is safe. He will hold no communication with anyone who would persuade the people to accept 11 hours as a compromise. His motto has ever been 'Ten Hours and nothing less'. We know of no man better able to fight the battle out of the House than himself.

From London Oastler advised the operatives to bring their opponents to the forthcoming meetings.⁵⁵

The Yorkshire campaign opened in the Huddersfield Philosophical Hall on 10 November, when some 2000 people rallied under the vicar, Bateman, to hear Oastler, Ferrand and Fielden. Two days later Oastler and Fielden addressed a fervent meeting in the Halifax Oddfellows' Hall.⁵⁶ Thereafter, Oastler spoke to crowded and enthusiastic rallies throughout the West Riding. On 13 November he was at Bradford, where Pollard presided — 'there was no question now before the public in which he would more willingly occupy so honourable a post'. Five days later, Oastler was at Keighley, followed by Dewsbury on the 20th, Wakefield on the 23rd, Barnsley on the 25th and Holmfirth on the 27th. Other meetings were held at Sheffield and Heywood, and Scoresby preached at a special service on the evils of female factory labour to 3000 Bradfordians.⁵⁷ Clerical support was still growing. Throughout Lancashire Anglican clergymen aided the committees, and Oastler told Grant that six priests had taken the chair at Yorkshire meetings. Both Oastler and Ashley urged the reformers to form as many committees as possible.⁵⁸

Enormous enthusiasm was raised. The Keighley Working Men's Hall was 'crowded to suffocation' [*sic*], Crabtree told Fielden :

Many Females had to be taken out sick and Hundreds in the street that called for a second meeting but Mr. Oastler and others were exhausted from the heat of the room.

'A splendid meeting' at Dewsbury listened to 'the best speeches [Crabtree] ever heard' :

Mr. Oastler never spoke better. Two Doctors spoke well. A large woolstapler (Mr. Tweedale) made a telling speech, found fault with Lord Ashley shrinking but the cause was in better hands, he said, Mr. Fielden would not shrink under any administration wether wig or Tory [*sic*].

Crabtree was the paid Yorkshire organiser, arranging meetings and publicity. 'There is an excellent artical in the Morning Herald', he told Fielden,⁵⁹

commenting on your speech. Mr. Walker from the Halifax Gardau was at Keighley and he told me that your speech had made a great impression in Halifax and they say it is the best that has been made on the Ten Hour question. I hear it is the Topic of Conversation at the Market Dinners.

After supporting the start of the campaign and presiding over a Keighley strike meeting, Ferrand was detained in London by Lewis' action. On 24 November Lord Denman found that he had libelled Lewis. *The Times* considered this Queen's Bench decision 'very unsatisfactory . . . sentence was passed *ex cathedra*'. But Greville rejoiced at Ferrand's 'severe drubbing', as 'he was the instigator of the motion for a criminal information, and but for him Lewis would not have done it'.⁶⁰ Ferrand returned home to join Oastler at the last Yorkshire rally, in Leeds Music Hall on 30 November. He regretted the Bill's postponements, when

The Tadpoles and Tapers were sending circulars throughout the country, and in 'violent' language threatening members of Parliament with the resignation of Ministers. . . . He might be 'violent'. He would tell them another thing : he would be violent until redress was granted to the working men.

Ferrand repeated his attacks on Graham and Lewis, to *The Times*' delight challenging them to accuse him before a jury.⁶¹

Throughout the campaign, only two people opposed the Ten Hours motion at Holmfirth and one at Leeds. Now other districts hoped for similar action. Fielden was anxious that a special effort should be made North of the Border, where opposition remained strong — although he could not help and personally regretted the necessity of meetings.⁶² The Manchester cotton magnates and their journals, the *Guardian* and the *Examiner* (allegedly controlled by Bright), condemned further legislation with traditional arguments on wage reductions. The *Guardian* sneered that operatives had struck for every cause but factory reform, claiming that this proved their hostility. Grant condemned this 'absurd and wicked' incitement, and Oastler answered similar statements by Charles Wood.⁶³ The Lancashire committee planned a wide campaign. 'The Committee have decided to hold public meetings in Lancashire, provided you think they are required', Mullineaux told Fielden,⁶⁴

it being their opinion that much good would result from them. They have also instructed me to write to our friend Mr. Oastler requesting him to attend all those meetings — they likewise hope that you will attend 4 or 6 of the principal meetings in this county. . . .

But Oastler was no longer strong enough to speak every night, and he rested in early December, before a Scottish tour with Ferrand and Rashleigh.

Grant's *Advocate* gave weekly reports of mounting activity, along with articles on the effects of the Bill and details of court cases. Todmorden masters and operatives met on 3 December and Burnley workers rallied next day, under the Rev. John Suthern in the National School, to hear Mullineaux, Bardsley and the Rev. James Taylor of Todmorden. Copying League methods, the Padiham committee held a tea party under a Baptist minister; the vicar, S. J. C. Adamson, wrote in support, and Taylor, Mullineaux, Henry Dean, Wilkinson and John Lord were the speakers. On 14 December Yorkshire and Lancashire delegates assembled at Todmorden under John Leech, to discuss future strategy. Balme and Mullineaux called for further subscriptions and circulated standard petitions. Bradford masters and overlookers met under Rawson on 18

December. Rochdale overlookers and managers and Preston reformers met next day, and Bacup overlookers followed two days before Christmas. Each meeting passed resolutions and planned local efforts. The old crop of publications also appeared — reprinted speeches, short poems and the Rev. E. R. Larken's *Few Words on the Ten Hours Factory Question*. And old journalistic allies remained firm. 'Mr. Wood cannot, dare not, again repeat his dangerous insinuation', asserted the *Halifax Guardian*, after Oastler's tour :⁶⁵

The desire for a ten hours bill is unanimous in the West Riding . . . [It] is virtually won. If the Whig ministry choose to complete the actual triumph, they will do well. If they stand in the way of its victory, *they won't stand long*.

V

Rashleigh was unable to visit Scotland, but Oastler started the tour at a great rally in Glasgow City Hall on 14 December. David Bell, a local master, presided, and supporters included Sir John Maxwell, William Campbell of Tullichewan Castle and Dr. Norman McLeod, minister of S. Columba's. Ferrand, Fielden and Sheriff Alison sent apologies, while James Oswald, a local Member, wrote reaffirming his opposition; but the operatives' resolutions passed unanimously. Oastler returned to Edinburgh next day.⁶⁶ On 16 December he spoke in Paisley Old Low Church, under Robert Kerr, a manufacturer, supported by two councillors, Pitkeithley and the local Chartists under Robert Cochran. Significantly, the famous Paisley Radical, Patrick Brewster of the Abbey Church, 'had not made up his mind to a compulsory restriction of the hours of labour, irrespective of the will or interest of the worker'; he was a Free-Trader as well as a Chartist. By contrast, John Thompson, minister of Free S. George's, enthusiastically supported the Bill.⁶⁷ Next day Oastler addressed a 'densely crowded' meeting in the Dundee Thistle Hall, supported by the Free Church leaders George Lewis and P. L. Miller and by the Chartists. During his visit, Oastler advised local ship carpenters, then on strike.⁶⁸ He returned to Edinburgh, where Ferrand joined him for a meeting in the Waterloo Rooms on Christmas Eve, under Sir James Forrest, a Free Churchman

and former Lord Provost. But although several prominent citizens attended along with the operatives, several ministers were absent, so a second rally was held in the Music Hall on 28 December.⁶⁹

The Scottish tour was extremely successful. Oastler stressed that his mission was a Christian duty, and gained wide support from Presbyterians, especially Free Churchmen. The Rev. Dr. Grey, who regretted 'the immense differences' between 'immoderate wealth' and 'deepest destitution', had sometimes suspected that

Mr. Oastler was an agitator, and, perhaps, something worse; but he was delighted to find him a witness for the truth, and almost a martyr for it. . . .

But the greatest triumph was the 'conversion' of the redoubtable Dr. Thomas Chalmers, to whom Lewis gave Oastler an introduction. At breakfast, Chalmers objected that 'the Bill was contrary to the principles of Free Trade', and Oastler agreed: 'if Free Trade be right, the Ten Hours Bill is wrong'. But Chalmers was a Free Trader. 'That is very strange; I thought you were a Christian', retorted Oastler, contrasting liberal economics with social Christianity: ⁷⁰

The Christian knows that Society is one compact body, each individual member being dependent on the rest, each requiring the protection of all. The Free Trader, on the contrary, persuades himself that each member is a separate piece of independence, an isolated self.

Chalmers declared his support and introduced Oastler to John Hamilton, an advocate who, with several professional and business men, formed a new Edinburgh committee. The campaign had 'far exceeded [Grant's] most sanguine expectations'.⁷¹

Meanwhile, the usual controversies raged in England. The new *Burnley Bee* opposed reform and the *Liverpool Express* supported it. At Manchester Bright condemned the 'grossest injustice' of Fielden's 'most disastrous measure', and at Chorlton denounced Fielden, Oastler and Ferrand as 'individuals who . . . had never shown any extraordinary sagacity hitherto on public questions'. When Oastler challenged him to a debate in the Manchester Free Trade Hall, Bright refused,

'not from any feeling of disrespect', but because discussion ought to be conducted in Parliament. Oastler angrily told the Manchester electors, whom Bright was canvassing, that

The path to truth is by calm, friendly, *free* discussion. Mr. Bright prefers to 'backbite' in public, and then seek for 'protection' from the arguments of the accused in the House of Commons.

Grant regularly recalled free traders' former promises; and liberal philanthropy, such as the provision of parks without time to enjoy them, was also assailed.⁷²

On Sunday, 27 December, 68 delegates from Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire and Derbyshire committees assembled in the 'Woodman's Hut' at Manchester. They discussed a letter from Hindley, 'distinctly denying' that he preferred 11 hours, but, typically, advising the acceptance of it, which had been 'several times within their reach', as a first step. Hindley claimed that most of the Cabinet and Commons, many masters and 'a not inconsiderable number of operatives' favoured this course, and doubted whether the Yorkshire agitation had changed a single vote. The conference unanimously rejected this ill-timed plan, passed a Ten Hours motion and asked Fielden to introduce the Bill in the new Session.⁷³ Financial appeals were issued; as John Fenton, the Bury secretary, pointed out, the operatives could not bear the whole cost of the campaign.⁷⁴

Tactics were planned in detail by Fielden. He had advised Grant that any delegates favouring 11 hours should 'be heard with every mark of kindness'; but he was firm himself. 'If we swerve from 10 where shall we find a resting point?' he asked. But

unless the hands were determined never to cease agitation until a 58 hour bill were obtained, for which they had so long contended, he would have very faint hope of success. . . . Therefore, he must again press the absolute necessity of union.

He wanted petitions — 'as many as it was possible to get' from every class: 'separate petitions from them would do great good'.⁷⁵ Strenuous canvassing was planned and the central committees issued an address *To the Nobility and Gentry*. Ashley aided the Northern campaign, while Oastler joined Fielden

in London. The full force of the Movement, strengthened by many new committees, was now poised for the final Parliamentary fight.

VI

There was great activity early in the New Year. The Mayor of Macclesfield chaired his town's meeting on 7 January. Heywood masters and overlookers met in the Brunswick Hotel, to hear Mullineaux and Rochdale and Littleborough delegates, on 13 January. Next day Mullineaux and Simpson of Dukinfield spoke in the 'Shoulder of Mutton' Inn at Newton Moor, while Fielden and William Taylor, a cotton master, addressed an Oldham Town Hall meeting.⁷⁶ On 21 January Ashley spoke at a great meeting in Manchester Town Hall, with Wray as chairman, declaring,

I recollect perfectly well one of your present Members saying, 'If I vote with the noble Lord for the Ten Hours Bill, will he follow me into the lobby on a division upon a motion for the repeal of the Corn Laws?'

Ashley now demanded a return concession for his own support of Free Trade. He was supported by Huntingdon and Gregory. Next day he spoke in the Blackburn theatre, with the vicar as chairman, and on 25 January addressed a large meeting in Bolton Temperance Hall under the Mayor, supported by Ainsworth and several manufacturers and ministers. On Tuesday, 26 January he moved to Bury, on Thursday to Rochdale and on Friday to Stockport. And while Ashley toured one circuit, Mullineaux' committee addressed meetings elsewhere. Mullineaux reported that two Darwen masters, a Chorley firm and the Platts of Hebden Bridge had failed to persuade their operatives to sign 11 hours petitions.⁷⁷

Lancashire's activity was paralleled in Yorkshire. Hebden Bridge workers met in the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' Inn, and Rawson and Balme's committee held nightly meetings around Bradford. At Buttershaw on 26 January the vicar, J. Bowman, and his curate, Thomas Floyd, gave support. Next day, Bowman spoke in Bierley Church school, with Floyd and the local curate, Thomas Sutcliffe; and on 28 January, J. L. Frost chaired a

Bradford meeting. At each rally Anglican priests and operatives proposed every motion. But the campaign did not end with public meetings. William Fair, Mawdsley and Mullineaux canvassed prospective Manchester candidates, after which Grant declared that Bright was,

of all men with whom we are acquainted, the most unworthy of the support of any true friend of the factory children and the Ten Hours Bill.

The Peelite Earl of Lincoln also opposed any interference between employers and workers, although, claimed Grant,⁷⁸

None of the advocates of the Ten Hours Bill ever sought to include in the legislature [*sic*] adults; they have always contended for protection to children and minors, on the ground that their age and the circumstances under which they are placed, render them unfit to enter into contracts for their own advantage.

In an open letter to Russell, Oastler condemned the Poor Law — ‘the master-blunder of the age’ — and the Member who claimed that the operatives would be satisfied with 11 hours :

That hon. Member was deceived by a ten hours bill delegate, who had been tampered with in London by a professing friend, a member of the House. That delegate will not again misrepresent his constituents’ wishes. The petitioners for a ten hours bill can agree to no compromise; their claim admits of no reduction; they know that, to workmen and growing youths, more than 10 hours a day is death !

The ‘first duty of the first minister of a Christian government’, he told Russell, ‘was to avert the curse of God’. He also wrote to Hindley, condemning his 11 hours proposal as ridiculous, doubting his claimed support and insisting that the Yorkshire meetings had both disproved opponents’ allegations and converted Beckett. Bolton operatives sent Oastler a message of thanks. And six delegates — Brewer of Bolton, Mawdsley of Manchester, Balme and Rawson of Bradford and Leech and Pitkeithley of Huddersfield — travelled to Westminster.⁷⁹

On 26 January Fielden moved for leave to introduce his Bill. Ferrand seconded him, but, reported Grant, Escott, ‘with vindictive zeal’, and Peel, ‘with his characteristic smoothness and plausible sophism’, opposed the Bill, along with Hume

and Trelawney, whose argument, claimed Ferrand, 'only went to prove that he was not to be interfered with if he walloped his own ass'. Strickland supported Fielden, but Russell and his Home Secretary, Grey, reserved their decision.⁸⁰ Ministers generally were known to favour an 11 hours compromise, while most Liberals and Peelites still opposed the measure. Brewer's delegates worked assiduously, as the Second Reading approached. They told Members of the benefits of past legislation and that '*fierce home competition*' and inadequate demand were more dangerous than foreigners. Labour had increased, as machine speeds rose and most mills were working a 4-day week, or 8 hours' day, as another depression advanced. 'Thus', claimed the delegates,⁸¹

if supply and demand is the only mode of regulating wages and profits,) as has been so often asserted by the Anti-Corn Law League, (wages and profits would advance by the operation of the Ten Hours Bill.

Rochdale, Heywood, Bury, Bacup, Todmorden, Oldham and 'Lancashire Central' delegates met at Rochdale on 7 February, under Charles Heywood, to co-ordinate local efforts and select six more London delegates. As the Constable was hostile, Rochdale reformers cancelled their meeting and sent mill petitions to Fielden, Crawford, d'Eyncourt, Lord Alford, Lord Henry Bentinck, Lord Surrey and Stafford O'Brien. Padiham and Lowerhouse sent petitions to Strickland, Sheil, Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Colonel Austen and O'Connell, Burnley to Manners, Manchester to Russell, Brotherton and Ferrand, Ashton and Dukinfield to Hindley, Chorley to Fielden, Newton and Hyde to Macaulay, Preston to Strickland, Lord George Bentinck and Russell, Tyldesley to Lord Sandon, William Entwistle, Palmerston, B. B. Cabbell and Ferrand, and Glasgow to Russell. The vicar of Leigh, J. Irvine, got up a petition at his own expense, which was presented by Russell, along with a petition from 528 sympathetic Yorkshire and Lancashire masters.⁸² In all, 600 petitions with 170,000 signatures reached Westminster during February.

Grant and Crabtree, at a wage of £2 per week, travelled round the factory districts organising petitions. Fletcher wrote a widely publicised letter to Fielden, comparing mortality rates

among factory and other children.⁸³ And Ashley led a masters' delegation — Fielden, John Cooper of Preston, Kenworthy of Blackburn, Taylor of Oldham, Thomas Fielden of Manchester, John Fielden junior of Todmorden and William Walker of Bradford — to interview Grey, on 8 February. The operatives' delegates also visited Grey, memorialised Peel and circularised every Member.⁸⁴ But Halifax masters reintroduced their 12 hours document, and Henry Ashworth and R. H. Greg organised Manchester opponents on 2 February. Ashworth was opposed to a reduction of one minute, and led a delegation to the Home Office, while Bright presented a memorial from 353 masters employing 123,226 hands; they included Ermen and Engels, Elkanah Armitage, Birley, Kershaw of Stockport, William Greg, the Ashworths, Samuel Greg, Samuel Marsland and Bright. Grant thought that unfair means had probably been used in preparing the paper, but when the Dundee Chamber of Commerce considered the Bill on 13 February, such industrial princes as David Baxter, John Laing, Thomas Neish, James Brown and Edward Baxter only disagreed over whether to accept any legislation at all.⁸⁵

VII

Fielden proposed the Second Reading on 10 February, opposed by Hume but generally supported by Grey, who, however, still preferred 11 hours. Bankes, Newdegate, Edward Howard, Muntz and Manners — whose speech, declared Grant, 'should be read by every operative' — supported the Bill. Philips talked of foreign competition, and Wood (the Chancellor), Bowring and Bright condemned the measure, while Russell was vaguely sympathetic. In the evening, the delegates met in the Crown Hotel, under young John Fielden, to thank Manners and answer Bright's allegation that workers had never thought of reduced wages by pointing to 21 public meetings which had considered the point. In order to answer Wood, Balme was sent to Halifax, to discover why some mills had dropped 11 hours experiments.⁸⁶

In the resumed debate on 17 February, Sir Andrew Leith Hay, Dennistoun, Roebuck, Trelawney and Henry Marsland opposed the Bill, and Bernal, Crawford, Ferrand, Inglis,

Strickland, Lord Ebrington and Duncombe spoke for it. Ferrand characteristically 'supported the prayer of the toiling millions' by attacking Ward, Philips, Hume, Peel and Bright. He was horrified to see

members of the House rising to argue about a $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of cotton as if equal in importance with the lives of millions, and calling upon the House to refuse the Bill, in order that their inordinate wealth might become greater still.

While denying that they were specifically legislating for men, he admitted that

It was for women and children that they interfered, but a Ten Hours Bill would be for the benefit of all, and secure more regularity and uniformity of labour.

The Bill passed by 195 votes to 87, against an 11 hours amendment. 'This is Mr. Ferrand's triumph', declared the *Standard*,⁸⁷

the triumph of courage and perseverance in a good cause; and Mr. Ferrand deserves it. It is true Lord Ashley's services are inestimable, but Mr. Ferrand has one claim more . . . [he] did not suffer himself to be cheated as Lord Ashley did . . . upon the promise of the millowners that the Corn Laws once repealed, they would agree to a Ten Hours Bill.

Ferrand defended Ashley from Bright's attacks in the House.

Jubilant Manchester reformers thanked God and their Parliamentary supporters, while the Lancashire committee assured Russell that Bright's accusations were unfounded. Each committee followed the lead, and some groups collected further funds.⁸⁸ Even the *Manchester Guardian* felt that 'the modified support of the most influential members of the Government' would ensure the Bill's passage, though it would 'be converted into an 11 hours bill', in Committee. It condemned the operatives' 'unfounded' belief that it would not reduce wages and Russell's 'too light' dismissal of foreign competition. Later, it sadly noted that 'the probability was that the Bill would be carried as it now stood', but was consoled by the fact that

There certainly never was a time, in the history of the cotton manufacture, when a limitation to ten hours would interfere less with the engagements of the masters, or the earnings of the workpeople, than the period now before us. . . .

The depression probably helped the Bill's passage.⁸⁹ The London delegates told all M.P.s of this opinion of 'the recognised organ of the millowners of Lancashire'. For some time in February Grant reinforced them, with expenses paid by Fielden.⁹⁰ The *Stockport Advertiser* was more cautious: the Bill was still in 'a doubtful position', and might yet end as an 11 hours compromise. The *Manchester Examiner* — which Bright denied controlling, but which generally reflected his views — still opposed the Bill's 'unsound and hazardous principle', claiming that

The advocates of the Bill have invariably sought to create a belief among the factory operatives that no reduction of wages would follow the shortening of the hours of labour . . . and with this persuasion the operatives are satisfied to make the attempt. . . . Trade cannot long be carried on without profit, and to secure some profit, if no other way [is] open, wages must and will give way. . . .

The *Manchester Courier* and *Leeds Intelligencer* supported Fielden's Bill.⁹¹

During the debates, Oastler published a series of letters in the *Morning Post*, developing his social philosophy and particularly hoping that Russell might restore parochial government. Reformers waited for the next debate; Ashley felt 'intense anxiety' and 'dreamed of [the Bill] by day and night'. Russell's non-committal replies to Northern memorials showed that success was still far from certain.⁹²

Before discussion was resumed on 3 March, all sympathetic Members were again canvassed, and on the 2nd the delegates took memorials from 83 committees to Russell. In the debate, Brotherton, Lord George Bentinck and Ebrington favoured the Bill and Morpeth favoured taking it to Committee, noting that the Marshalls had suffered very little loss from an 11 hours' day. Brotherton spoke movingly of the 'absolute necessity' of the Bill:

if all men were men of humanity, there would be no need of legislation, and if the people employed in manufactures were merely created to eat, drink, work and die, the question might be argued on commercial principles and on the abstract principles of commercial economy.

Graham, Escott, Peel and Gibson remained hostile, but the House resolved to go into Committee by 190 votes to 100.⁹³ The Lancashire committee printed Brotherton and Ferrand's speeches as a pamphlet, and the delegates returned North to tell the news. Charles Howarth, delegate for Rochdale, Bury and Heywood, spoke in Heywood on 11 March, when Glasgow operatives also met. Next day Balme and Rawson organised a Bradford rally to thank supporters and solicit further aid. On 15 March Mawdsley and Brewer appealed to Members, claiming that opposition was now confined almost entirely to politicians and that a single supporter's absence might ruin thirty years' work. They also wrote to Russell; and 922 firms announced support.⁹⁴

On 17 March Dennistoun and Bright continued their opposition, and Aglionby and Russell supported reform. In Committee, Hume, Dennistoun, Bright and Roebuck led the opposition, and Fielden, Ferrand and Strickland supported the Bill. The Government's 11 hours amendment was lost through Peelite abstentions, and the Premier, using notes provided by Ashley, accepted that the Bill would inevitably limit adult labour. It passed by 144 votes to 66.⁹⁵ Oastler thanked Russell for his speech, and Lord John replied hoping that the Bill 'might produce the good effects which its persevering advocates had anticipated'.⁹⁶

Reformers were naturally jubilant. 'No cause . . . has more real claim on the support of the public', declared the *Stockport Advertiser*: ' . . . our national importance would be better consulted by being more philanthropic and less sordid as political economists.' Ashley congratulated the reformers, while Mullineaux started to plan tactics for the Lords' debates.⁹⁷ A hard core of opposition remained, led by the bitter Bright, who tried to distract attention to shopworkers' conditions: his 'unscrupulous audacity was beyond all description' by Grant — 'there was nothing too mean for such an opponent'.⁹⁸

On 22 March Bury, Rochdale and Heywood reformers heard Howarth's latest report and thanked Bentinck, as leader of the Protectionist majority. Five days later, the Central Committees held a conference in the White Hart Hotel at Todmorden, under Rawson, and appointed the Earl of Ellesmere and Lord Feversham as the Bill's leaders in the Upper

House. Both peers were old Ten Hours men; as Lord Francis Egerton and William Duncombe, they had sat as Tory M.P.s.⁹⁹

After the long agitation, reformers now faced almost certain victory. By contrast with Peel, Russell had accepted the defeat of his own plan. And the recession made it additionally difficult to defend long labour. Baines was engaged in leading Liberal Leeds against the new Education Bill, again fighting the Church, the Tories, the Chartists, Hook and, on this occasion, the Whigs; Cobden was on the Continent. Of 179 Manchester mills, only 92 were fully working and 17 had closed; average hours were 7 daily.¹⁰⁰ And public opinion had also moved.

Optimistic reformers now looked at wider questions. Grant took up the 'Health of Towns' question, and Oastler published his recent letters, with a dedication to Wellington, whom he reminded of his prophecy that the Poor Law would ruin Protection. Oastler could repeat the observations which the Duke considered 'moonshine and humbug' thirteen years before. 'One single edict of the Poor Law Commissioners, the migration edict . . .' had, he believed, 'consigned to death, under various forms, more human beings than strewed the plains of Waterloo'. Thus he maintained his old beliefs, which Ferrand regularly expressed in the Commons.¹⁰¹

Bolton reformers made a presentation to Lord and Lady Ashley. But opposition was maintained through the last stages of the debate. Hostile Lancashire masters visited London in April, and Grant expected that 'protests and memorandums, with forged signatures, would again be resorted to by Messrs. Bright, Ashworth, Roebuck and Co.' He visited London himself, spending £2 : 1s. on treating reporters in the 'King's Arms' at Westminster and 14s. 6d. on 'treating officers of the House of Commons' — expenses not publicly announced, but doubtless valuable.¹⁰² Mawdsley and Brewer were assured by Graham, Bright, Dennistoun, Escott and R. H. Greg that there would be no opposition at the Report stage on 21 April; but amendments were moved by Hume and Leader, supported by Trelawney, Escott, Roebuck, Philips and Bright. While Beresford whipped in supporters, Philip Howard, Crawford, Ferrand, Muntz, de Lacy Evans, Hindley, Fielden and Russell (though personally

still favouring 11 hours) spoke for the Bill. The amendments were defeated by 104 votes to 46 and 94 to 31.¹⁰³

Their opponents' final 'tricks' infuriated reformers. 'There is nothing too mean', wrote Grant,

for the representatives of the moneyocracy . . . no petty trick to which they will not have recourse, in order to gain a point or save a shilling. . . .

He saw Bright as the principal villain and published a choice selection of Press comments on him. The *Morning Post* thought him a 'horrid brute', and the *Herald* considered the 'heartless Quaker' was 'totally ignorant'; to the *Daily News*, he was 'singularly ignorant', the *Satirist* noted his 'bile and bad feeling', *John Bull* condemned his 'flimsy arguments and ignorant misrepresentations' and the *Globe* thought his speeches 'not less feeble in argument than unfounded in fact'. Grant triumphantly added that 'nothing more untrue was ever uttered' than Bright's claim that his petition was signed by the vast majority of cotton concerns.¹⁰⁴ He urged each committee to petition the Lords, and Balme's Bradford men, with Hook, canvassed the Bishop of Ripon, C. T. Longley.¹⁰⁵ In London, Mawdsley and Brewer issued final circulars to M.P.s on 26 April and 1 May.

On 3 May Fielden moved the Third Reading, supported by Grimsditch, while Trelawney and Leader, supported by Hume, Labouchere and Stansfield, made a last effort to hold up the Bill; Fielden succeeded by 151 votes to 88.¹⁰⁶ Next day, Fielden delivered his Bill to Lord Shaftesbury, accompanied by Ferrand, Brotherton, Disraeli, Grimsditch, Rashleigh, Entwistle, Bankes, Milnes Gaskell, Mannors, Sir William Jolliffe, Crawford, Lord Granby and others. Ellesmere and Feversham introduced the Bill on 5 May, and a week later the delegates issued their first circular to the peers.

VIII

Victory had been gained, asserted Grant, 'after an opposition unparalleled in the history of legislation'. He now recommended reconciliation, even with Bright. Manchester reformers prepared two petitions for Ellesmere, signed by over

90 medical men, three canons, many clergymen and several Methodists —

but they were sorry to remark that most . . . ministers who took a prominent part in the agitation of Corn Law repeal refused to sign their petitions.

The Accrington petition was signed by 8 masters, 4 doctors, 12 clergy and many operatives; at Bolton 7 masters, 26 clergymen, 12 ministers and 9 doctors gave support, at Wigan the rector and 12 clergy. Bacup collected 15 petitions, and almost all Chorley mills sent support. The vicar of Leigh again gave his aid, and many priests helped the Bury and Macclesfield petitions. Bright's old enemy, Dr. Molesworth, the vicar of Rochdale, signed his local petition, with 50 manufacturers. Petitions poured in from great towns like Leeds, Huddersfield, Blackburn, Oldham, Ashton and Bradford — where all the Anglican clergy gave support — and many smaller places. They were sent to Ellesmere, Feversham, Wharnccliffe, Grey, Richmond and Buckingham and the Bishops of London, Oxford, Chester, Ripon and Exeter.¹⁰⁷

The supporting Press joined in the exultation. 'The Factory Bill was a boon to the working classes which [the *Stockport Advertiser*] believed would not be obstructed in the House of Lords.' The *Manchester Courier* 'rejoiced in the success of Mr. Fielden's Bill'. Ferrand, who 'never gave a bad vote, or . . . failed to give a good one', was again praised by the *Standard*: his

continuance in Parliament was a perpetual guarantee for the interests of the industrious classes and of the poor.

And *The Times* commented that 'a great event came off in a very quiet way', reminding its readers that 12 hours' labour meant 14 hours' attendance and that operatives rarely saw the sunlight.¹⁰⁸

Ellesmere introduced the Bill on 17 May, lengthily reviewing the case for legislation, from personal knowledge. Feversham claimed that 'the advocates of the Bill were the industrious and well-disposed, [and] its opponents the idle and evil-disposed', who drank their family's earnings. Brougham and the Earl of Clarendon, the President of the Board of Trade, opposed the Bill. But Bishop Blomfield of London spoke of the State's duty

to protect children from parents who used them as 'mere instruments for making money', and Wilberforce of Oxford declared that 'it was wrong to create wealth by sacrificing the souls and bodies of men'.¹⁰⁹ The Second Reading passed by 53 to 11. Ashley noted next day,

The Bishops behaved gallantly, 13 remained to vote; three spoke, and most effectively: London, Oxford and S. Davids; Clarendon (!) and Brougham (!!) in opposition. This will do very much to win the hearts of the manufacturing people to Bishops and Lords, it has already converted the hard mind of a Chartist delegate.

But the *Manchester Guardian* considered it 'the height of presumption for one who can have studied the question so little [as Oxford] to address the House on it'.¹¹⁰

The Ten Hours Bill finally passed the Lords on 1 June, when five opponents — Monteaule (Marshall's son-in-law), Ashburton (the head of the Baring bankers), Radnor (a leading free trader), Foley and Wrottesley — entered a last protest. A week later the measure received the Royal Assent.¹¹¹

There was naturally great rejoicing at the triumph. On 22 May the London delegates thanked God, and

pledged themselves to promote by every means in their power those religious and social blessings which it had been the object of the Bill to extend to the factory workers.

Livesey of Preston suggested the establishment of Short Time Schools, and in his last *Advocate*, on 12 June, Grant remembered the 'martyrs', Gould, Peel and Sadler, and the sacrificial toil of Ashley, Fielden, Wood, Oastler, Condry, Walker, Bull, Foster, Doherty and — an irritating habit of Grant's — himself. From Birmingham, Bull paid tribute to Fielden and Oastler, 'with a full heart', Inglis and Ferrand, who 'had never swerved'. Ashley wrote to the committees, thanking God for the victory, urging that it should be used properly and pledging his future services. And Oastler addressed the children on the use of free time in religious, educational and domestic duties.¹¹²

The operatives also expressed strong religious feelings at their celebration meetings. London delegates and Parliamentary leaders met in the 'King's Arms' on 2 June, under Ashley, to pass comprehensive resolutions of thanks. Six days later

Hargreaves' Lancashire committee passed similar motions in the 'Red Lion'; both meetings first expressed gratitude to God.¹¹³ Yorkshire reformers tried to demonstrate their admiration for Bull practically, by memorialising Russell for his preferment. Russell's secretary replied that he was already on his long list; but Bull, impoverished as ever, was grateful for the attempt.¹¹⁴ There were also actions not openly acknowledged; for instance, John and Thomas Fielden paid the *Advocate's* losses and some £206 for Grant's expenses, while Ashley, John Fielden and Wood each gave him £25.¹¹⁵

A souvenir placard to commemorate the occasion was printed in gold type on black paper. Glasgow delegates published a letter of thanks to all prominent supporters for their 'disinterested advocacy of the cause'. And many committees organised celebrations. John Halliwell led an Oldham procession to greet Fielden and Johnson, and tea-parties and rallies were widely organised, though few events could match the feast and entertainment which Walker provided for his 3000 workers, on 17 June, which Oastler was sadly too ill to attend.¹¹⁶ The final triumph had apparently arrived.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE TEN HOURS ACT

FIELDEN'S Act came into partial operation on 1 July 1847, when young persons and women were restricted to 11 hours' labour daily, or 63 hours in a week. The change was effected by altering the provisions of the 1833 and 1844 Acts; and from 1 May 1848 the limitation was to be 10 hours per day, or 58 in a week. But many problems remained. The restriction was scarcely noticed during the depression; in May, some 24,000 Manchester operatives were unemployed, 84,000 on 'short time' and 77,000 fully employed. And Stockport workers still complained of the displacement of men by female workers; one operative particularly criticised James Kershaw, a local Liberal candidate, contrasting him with the benevolent 'monopolist' Thomas Marsland.¹

Generally, the committees took no part in the July elections, which produced some surprises. Fielden and John Cobbett were beaten at Oldham, by 'a most unholy' alliance, according to Grant, who also suffered from 'the vindictiveness of the whole of our opponents'.² Hornby held Blackburn, but Fer- rand, opposed by the Protectionist Harewood in favour of his 'Free Trade' brother, W. S. Lascelles, did not contest Knaresborough. Busfeild defeated Hardy's son Gathorne, at Bradford. Henry Edwards shared the representation of Halifax with Sir Charles Wood, defeating Miall and Ernest Jones, a rising Chartist leader. Many Free Traders triumphed in the industrial areas: W. J. Fox won Oldham, Colonel Perronet Thompson Bradford and C. P. Villiers South Lancashire (though choosing to sit for Wolverhampton). Bright and Gibson were unopposed at Manchester, and Morpeth and Cobden in the West Riding. Ashley defeated Roebuck at Bath, and O'Connor won Nottingham, as the first — and only — Chartist M.P.; with Walter's son, he defeated Gisborne and Hobhouse. In a December by-election for Cobden's Stockport seat, Ker-

shaw narrowly defeated Marsland. Old Walter died on 25 July, to Oastler's intense grief, and next day Jonathan Akroyd followed him to the grave.

The textile depression continued, and in September many masters resorted to a 10 per cent wage reduction, promising a restoration when conditions improved.³ The Lancashire spinners preferred a temporary close-down, and complained against the cuts, which would increase operatives' debts and extend the depression. The Rev. Hugh Stowell made *A Plea for the Working Man: Do Not Lower His Wages*, and in October the spinners threatened a general strike; but 'turn-outs' at Dukinfield and Ashton were soon defeated.⁴ Scottish masters used the depression as a stick to beat the Act, and prepared petitions against its full enforcement, with the usual gloomy prophecies. In October Horner reported,⁵

I have already seen indications of a disposition in some quarters to resort to plans for evading the law — such as employing young persons to clean the machinery at extra times, instead of within the 11 hours, and cutting off portions of the periods fixed by law for meal-times.

Some masters used relays at staggered periods, while keeping the letter of the law on actual hours. Although the Inspectors had once favoured child relays to maintain the adults' full day, they strongly opposed this system, which kept restricted operatives at the mill for up to 15 hours. Quite apart from the inconvenience — which might negative the Act's benefits — such methods made the detection of infringements very difficult. Horner informed masters that the system was illegal under Graham's Act, which provided that protected workers should be employed at the same times, apart from the afternoon shift of half-timers.⁶

In December, worried by 'feelers' put out by the *Manchester Guardian*, Ashley asked Grant whether he had heard of any plans to obstruct the introduction of 'Ten Hours'. Grant replied, he later told Fielden, that he had heard the project mooted, but knew of no organised effort, though he

learned that some of the masters had sent round their overlookers to ask this question: 'Would you rather work 10, 11 or 12 hours at corresponding wages?' . . .

Ashley became alarmed. 'So a desperate effort is to be made to repeal the "ten hours bill"', he told Fielden. 'If the work-people are true, this can never be effected — if they are timid or deceived, the masters will triumph. . . .' But Fielden could not believe that there was 'such a monster in Parliament'; although he knew that 'some of the miserable, half employed and half fed and clothed factory hands' would favour longer hours, '99 out of a hundred' would oppose repeal. Indeed, 'if revolt in the manufacturing districts be aimed at, a repeal . . . would tend to accomplish it'. He suggested asking Russell and Grey for their views. And he told Grant,⁷

I have no doubt the factory hands will sooner have their wages advanced by holding to the 10 hours bill than by submitting to longer hours of work. . . .

But as trade showed signs of improving, the temptation to evade the law grew. Stuart reported that Scottish masters ⁸

maintained that until now they were never aware . . . that restrictions prevented them from employing [restricted persons] *at such hours as they choose*. . . .

No doubt, many impoverished operatives were glad to work long hours, after the slump. But the Ten Hours men opposed any weakening of the Act. 'And so they are at work again!' Oastler angrily wrote to Fielden:

I gave them credit for more sense. Never mind: if we must have another tug, it shall, if I meddle, be for *Eight*. . . .

'If the operatives are firm, no one will induce the House even to admit the Bill', Ashley told Fielden; but

I have been warned by several parties of the intended movement on the part of the masters. They had, I hear, a meeting a day or two days ago. Mr. Birley, whom I saw, told me that he did not co-operate with the Association . . . Mullineaux writes me that great efforts are being made to cajole the men.

Ashley urged Lancashire workers to resist all temptation; ⁹ and most did so, although several repeal petitions were collected. Fielden also wrote to the operatives, promising an eight hours agitation if the Act were menaced. This address did much good, reported Mullineaux; two card rooms at Houldsworth's mill withdrew their petitions after reading it. Preston re-

formers rallied on 23 December, but Mullineaux could not attend, 'in consequence of the expense', he hopefully told Fielden. Crabtree circulated posters in Bradford, Keighley, Bingley and Leeds,

drawing the attention of the working people to the ulterior objects of the League and arousing their indignation at the sneaking, shuffling, underhand manner in which they had attempted to rob them of the right which they had so hardly won.

He thought that Oastler and Fielden's 8 hours threats had deterred the masters.¹⁰

Early in 1848 Mullineaux was seriously disturbed by the number of 11 hours petitions circulated at Rochdale, Manchester and elsewhere. The spinners could no longer give financial help, he told the ever-generous Fielden; the remaining committees were active,¹¹

but there are many places where the men have been suffering severely and have now got a little work and dare not make themselves conspicuous. This should and would be done by our com^{tee} if they had the necessary means at their command.

It became increasingly probable that the reformers would have to revive their organisation, to defend the Act. In any case, many wanted much more than limitation of hours. 'It was questionable', claimed Mill, whether mechanical inventions

had lightened the day's toil of any human being . . . they had not yet begun to effect those great changes in human destiny which it was their nature and in their futurity to accomplish.

And two years later, Alison complained that ¹²

Society had become a great gambling house, in which colossal fortunes were made by the few, and the great majority were turned adrift penniless, friendless, to destruction, ruin or suicide.

The factory reformers had long hoped to effect such a social transformation as would end such concomitants of liberal capitalism.

I

During the autumn of 1847 Chartism enjoyed something of a revival. By November, 42,000 people had subscribed some

£80,000 to the Land Company. Samuel Kydd, Jones and other lecturers spread the gospel, and Engels optimistically welcomed the new agitation. Somerville, Hobson and others strongly opposed the Land Scheme; Chartism had lost much support in its erratic progress. But activity mounted in 1848, especially after the February Paris Revolution. O'Connor, Kydd, Jones, Harney and MacDouall roused large audiences for a new Petition, for some reason no longer demanding the Ballot. In March there were widespread disturbances, and on 3 April a London Convention, excited by the fall of the Orleans Monarchy, talked of a National Assembly. The Petition, said by Jones to bear 6,000,000 signatures, was to be presented on 10 April, after a mammoth rally. London was garrisoned by troops under Wellington, and thousands of special constables were sworn. But the Kennington Common demonstration was a failure, and the vaunted Petition was found to have under 2,000,000 signatures, many of them forged or facetious. The last great menace of Chartism was laughed away.

But the vast, amorphous movement died hard, even after a Parliamentary Committee condemned the Land Scheme, in August. Kingsley and Maurice's Christian Socialist group attempted to work with some Chartists; and middle-class Radicals made another attempt to gain proletarian support. But the old 'physical force' spirit remained strong in the 'Year of Revolutions'. There were disturbances in London and the North during the spring and summer. W. E. Forster found the state of Bradford 'most alarming' in May: ¹³

large numbers of men were armed and drilling nightly, and there was of course much fear and suspicion, and a bitter class feeling.

A policeman was killed in an Ashton riot, and troops were called out in several areas; at Bingley, the indefatigable Ferrand was supported by a hundred aged Chelsea Pensioners with ancient flintlock blunderbusses, in his activities against local physical force leaders.

While magistrates and Chartists were thus occupied, the full Ten Hours Act came into force. 'The change', declared the *Halifax Guardian*,

came noiselessly and unnoticed by any but those immediately concerned. In fact, Nature had anticipated the Legislature, and,

instead of finding the Act of Parliament a burden and an evil, the manufacturers would have been only too glad to be able to run their mills for the full time allowed by law.

Oastler, again unemployed after the failure of his employer, could do little from Fulham about the Northern situation. But in March Stephens started his *Ashton Chronicle*, which was to become the reformers' mouthpiece. He noted that Hindley's own mill was working for 13 hours. And Stephens maintained his hostility to the Poor Law, contesting the election for the Ashton Guardians,

on the express understanding that he hated the law of Malthus, and would thwart, bend or break it to the utmost of his power. . . .

Both he and unemployed Bradford workers advocated a policy of providing work on waste lands.¹⁴ Within weeks, a new agitation grew up around Stephens in Ashton.

The Inspectors shared the reformers' attitude towards law-breaking Lancashire masters. Horner declared that

with a power to work by relays of hands, and of giving mealtimes at various periods of the day, and of changing the hours of work and meals of every hand employed, arbitrarily from day to day, no restriction of the hours of work could be enforced in the factories of artful men.

In 1845 the Inspectors had been assured by Graham that under his Act a factory was not allowed to work over 12 hours, from the time when children or young persons started work. Consequently, they were prepared to prosecute offenders. But, as yet, breaches were fairly few. The Act was 'very partially felt', Horner reported in June, 'as many mills had been already closed, and a large proportion had shortened their time of working . . .'. Nevertheless, the trend was clear. The system planned by some masters, reported Howell, was ¹⁵

some one of the many plans for shuffling the hands about in endless variety and shifting the hours of work and rest for different individuals throughout the day, so that you may never have one complete set of hands working together in the same room at the same time.

How the plan worked was explained to a friend of Stephens by an Ashton woman :

We all begin the first thing in the morning; the *first* gang goes out at 7 o'clock, and comes in again at half past 9; and then *another* gang goes out and comes in at half past 11; and then *another* gang goes out and comes in at half past 2; and then we work on till half past 7. Thus, you see, we are kept at it, backwards and forwards, here and there, from half past 5 until 8 o'clock. We can make no use of this time, but make it away as we can.

Marx later dramatically stated that ¹⁶

the hours of rest were turned into hours of enforced idleness, which drove the youths to the pot-house and girls to the brothel.

But until the Chartist excitement lessened, a full agitation was impossible. Stephens explained that people cared nothing for the Charter, but their wretched conditions led them into agitation. And local employers, who showed 'suicidal opposition and resistance to the just claims of the labouring people', could scarcely complain against workers' movements. Stephens persuaded local Guardians into establishing a farm for the unemployed, but condemned the low wages paid. 'Starvation, bankruptcy, bludgeon law and encampments of a thousand men on Kersal Moor were', to him, 'but a poor substitute for the roast beef and pudding of merry old England.' ¹⁷

Meanwhile, in March, Ashley again wrote, in alarmed, but rather exasperated, tones, to Fielden: ¹⁸

Turner and Crabtree have just informed me, on the authority of Mr. Hindley, that Mr. Wilson, Editor of the *Economist*, has resolved to move the repeal of the Ten Hours Act. The people must judge for themselves. I cannot fight the battle if they be hostile or indifferent, but if they are firm I will, God helping, fight such a battle in the House and out of it as shall make the passing of the measure 'prodigiously' difficult.

In mid-April Hindley suggested that a great 'Ten Hours' tea-party should be held in the Free Trade Hall on 1 May and that commemorative medals should be struck. But Fielden did 'not think there was the least necessity for such a demonstration': the reformers

had now the law on their side, and anyone moving for its repeal would only make himself a laughing stock for the good and virtuous of all parties and of every country.

He was reluctant to campaign against unknown enemies :

It's possible *advice* to the factory workers may be required when their labour is in better demand, and should that be the case soon, a meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the passing of the ten hours bill might offer an opportunity to tender such advice ; in the meantime, let us lay on our oars and keep a vigilant lookout. . . .

However, when Ashley favoured Hindley's plan, Fielden agreed to contact Grant, although

I should prefer seeing those move first who threaten to disturb the ten hours bill. We have the *law* on our side and nothing to complain of, unless we think 10 hours too long. . . .

He suggested a rally on the anniversary, 8 June, by which time an opponent might have acted ; Grant and the spinners agreed. Hindley arranged the manufacture of a gold medal for the Queen (which Ashley presented) and twenty in silver for the leaders. He was

anxious to give such a determined stamp to the proceedings that our opponents may see that they would have no chance if they were to attempt a repeal.

And he feared that Wilson would become President of the Board of Trade.¹⁹

The great party on 7 June was attended by Ashley, Ferrand and many operatives.²⁰ Oastler, 'like other Royal personages, [was] too poor to keep up his Royal station, and regretted that he could not attend on that account', reported Mullineaux. But he re-entered the arena by publishing the first of 25 *Addresses to the People of England*, condemning bourgeois Parliaments, the Poor Law and all centralisation. He still called for comprehensive Protection :

If you will persist in the '*let-alone*' system, 'leaving trade to find its level', you will always have periods of depression, with a large *deposit* of able-bodied unwilling idlers, whose sustenance is the tax on your folly and wickedness.

Subsequent *Addresses* attacked Cobden, Free Trade, the French revolutionaries, 'the policy of cheapness', centralisation and Republicanism.²¹ Auty, who held similar views, published a scurrilous attack on Liberal industrialists. And the radical

National Organisation of United Trades, formed by Metropolitan workers in November, called for local 'boards of trade' and protection.²²

Something of Stephens' old militancy reappeared, as he attacked mill-fines and adopted the 'new war-cry [of] Bread or Blood'; his chapel again attracted police attention. John Avison, a Stalybridge reformer, pointed out to local Sab-batarians that the factory system left only Sunday for baking. And Stephens, at the opening of the Mossley spinners' gardens in July, suggested that law-evading masters should be ostracised. With the Rev. James Holding, he started a spirited campaign against fines, long hours and wage reductions, urging workers to insist upon the Act.²³ Some Salford masters seemed determined to make the Act 'odious to the workers', Mullineaux told Fielden in May: Turner and Aspinall had agreed to their operatives' demands for proper meal-breaks, but Lang-worthy's workers were on strike against his refusal. 'The workpeople generally are well satisfied' [*sic*], Mullineaux reported, 'and very highly appreciate [the Act's] privileges and advantages.' But one John Ireland of Kirkcaldy told Fielden that Scottish masters were adopting Lancashire's practice of giving only one break.²⁴

When the Inspectors started to institute prosecutions, Bright and his friends invented complicated methods of evasion, and several benches refused convictions. In June the Law Officers confirmed that

the time of working for young persons, women and children (except children beginning to work in the afternoon) begins to run from the time specified in the Notice fixed up in the Factory as the time for beginning daily work.

But the attempt to restrict some operatives to 10 hours' labour, or less, between 5.30 a.m. and 8.30 p.m., without affecting male adults, created difficulties of phraseology which left legal loopholes. And Grey, the Home Secretary, was not disposed to support the Inspectors. Apparently considering the matter trivial and after receiving many complaints from masters, in August he told the Inspectors²⁵

not to lay informations against the millowners for a breach of the letter of the Act, or for employment of young persons by relays,

in cases in which there was no reason to believe that such young persons had been actually employed for a longer period than that sanctioned by law.

But, after some defeats, Horner had just won a test case against James Kennedy of Manchester ; and the Inspectors insisted on the importance of the matter to Grey.

By the autumn, the reformers were roused to the urgency of the situation. Oastler urged Grey to intervene : if evasions continued, he would demand Sadler's Bill, with restriction to the age of 21, control of the power, personal punishment and the exclusion of millowners from the bench during factory cases —

Nay, if we are forced into another struggle, I do not think it will be possible to restrain the demand for an Eight Hours Bill.

He told Cobden that both Free Trade and Fielden's Act should have a fair trial.²⁶ Old Yorkshire opponents, such as Starkey of Huddersfield, were operating the Act, without wage reductions, after the first experimental period ; the trouble occurred mainly in Lancashire. In December Stephens found that 'in hardly a single [Ashton] mill [were] the provisions of the Factory Act properly attended to' ; and complaining operatives were dismissed. Stephens still attacked Hindley :

Mr. Hindley's position is a peculiar and somewhat anomalous one. Jealous of his fame for philanthropy . . . [he] finds himself rather awkwardly encumbered with the very worst abuses of our mill system, as an extensive owner of works where the most flagrant deeds of discomfort are well known to have been done.

Hindley unfairly blamed his partner, his nephew.²⁷ Stephens warned workmen of attempts to persuade them to oppose the Act, and objected to Horner's survey of operatives' opinions. In December Horner estimated that about a third of the men and half of the women had been won over to 11 or 12 hours. Grant had complained of this 'very questionable' enquiry, in October ; Horner privately asked whether men 'would rather have 10 hours and 10 hours' wages, or 12 hours and 12 hours' wages'. William Taylor, Thomas Wilkinson, Mills and Grant all thought the matter serious enough to warrant a conference, and asked for Fielden's help.²⁸ The outlook was gloomy.

II

On 6 January 1849 over 60 Lancashire delegates met in the 'Woodman's Hut' at Manchester. Hindley told them that there was no possibility of Parliament restricting men; and when Johnson, the Manchester secretary, called for an effective Act, Hindley advised against petitioning Parliament. On the motion of Johnson and Mawdsley, it was decided to form a 'Society for the Protection of the Ten Hours Act', with a network of branches.²⁹ Stephens was sceptical, distrusting Hindley — who should have told Parliament of 'the absolute uselessness of any statute' not providing for stopping the engine, the removal of masters from the bench and the imprisonment of third offenders. And he condemned Hindley's advice that 'every man [should] button his coat and walk out of the mill', to gain shorter hours; this was no time for striking, and operatives should remember that Hindley had fought their last strike.³⁰

As the recession faded, more mills adopted relays; and Lancashire magistrates dismissed cases against them. 'The ten hours work of these unfortunate young women', commented the *Manchester Courier*,

is now to be taken out in snatches over the whole 24 . . . because certain gentlemen choose to *vote* that words *in an Act of Parliament* do not mean that which the *act* itself says *they do*. . . .

Stephens called for 'the Bill, the whole Bill and nothing but the Bill'; Government must force observance. But he also favoured a 12 hours' day (including meal-times) in summer, and 10 hours in winter, heavy punishments, improved regulations on certificates and an increase in manufacturers' Poor rates. Above all, he advocated the traditional Lancashire policy: ³¹

The Restriction on the Moving Power, without which no Bill, however framed, is worth the paper on which it is printed. . . . *Old Ned* is too slippery a sinner to be caught in any other net than this.

Horner remained determined to prosecute firms using relays, but Stuart had announced, in August 1848, that he would take no action in Scotland. Because of their own and the justices'

differences, the Inspectors again appealed to Grey for advice, and the Home Secretary eventually decided that fresh legislation was needed. During January the Inspectors discussed Grey's proposal to allow the employment of two sets of women and young persons, but did not consider it feasible. Northern reformers knew nothing of these Home Office plans, but could see a deteriorating situation. When Horner prosecuted John Leach of Stalybridge for working four women between 6 a.m. and 7.30 p.m., Hindley's brother-in-law, Buckley, the Mayor of Ashton, dismissed the case. When a charge against the Ashworths was dismissed at Bolton, the discouraged Horner gave up the struggle.³² Stephens' *Chronicle* reported that an increasing number of Liberal masters were using relays to turn workers against the Act; and Hindley was now too late³³

to save the Ten Hours Bill, which it cost him so much to obtain, from becoming the heaviest curse to the people they have ever had to endure.

At this critical time, Oastler accepted an invitation to return North to advise bewildered Manchester operatives. On 1 February he joined Stephens and William Prowting Roberts, 'the Miners' Attorney-General', at a crowded meeting under Mawdsley, in the Hanging Ditch Corn Exchange. He opposed a new agitation:

The Ten Hours Bill is the law of the land. You are not come here as agitators, and I am not here as an agitator. I am here, and you are here, with the steady resolve, the determined resolution, to stand upon the law of England.

Reformers should simply demand full enforcement — and 'the exclusion of every man connected with factories, either by marriage or birth', from the bench. Louis Blanc had recently told him that,

During the hottest three days of the revolution in Paris . . . the universal cry . . . was 'Ten hours a day labour'. Let the magistrates in Manchester hear that.

Oastler's advice was that if the Act were repealed, they should campaign for an Eight Hours Bill, with restriction of the power and the treadmill for offenders; and he offered to debate the restriction of men with local Liberals. A week later he and

Stephens gave the same message to a large meeting at Ashton, and on 12 February at Stalybridge.³⁴ 'The great body of the millowners are keeping the law', Oastler pointed out, hoping for Government action against the 'insignificant fraction'. Before leaving, he discussed policy with Fielden and Walker. Stephens supported him, with rising militancy. To him, the cotton industry was 'a curse', unless it gave 10 hours; and with Holding, he raised clerical support:

Now, if ever, is the time for the Church to be true to herself, her country and her God. The factory labourer owes much of the success of the Ten Hours cause to the disinterested and devoted exertions of the Clergy.

The Anglican clergy of Ashton and Stalybridge memorialised the Queen, Manchester overlookers wrote to the Government, Lancashire delegates met Ministers, and Hindley visited Grey.³⁵

Ashley tried to keep the Parliamentary initiative, hoping to repeat the 1844 restriction of labour between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. 'My notice', he told Fielden,

is very general, and fixed for no particular day. It was given principally in order that the question might be kept in our hands, and not seized, as I heard that it would be, by any other.

But he was perplexed by the Northern situation. 'If you and the operatives prefer to abide by the law as it is, I shall acquiesce in your decision, having forewarned you the others will not do the same', he continued:³⁶

The Inspectors are very anxious to enforce their interpretation of the Law, but . . . the Government [is] I fear, timid. You will have a proposition from the Minister, carried in that case inevitably by the House, legalising the employment of relays. The social and domestic benefits . . . will at once be lost.

Not all masters were as determined to break the Act as the Quakers Bright and the Ashworths. But on 13 February the Millowners' Association, assembled at Manchester under R. H. Greg, offered new terms:

If an Eleven Hours Act were passed, the members of the Association would agree to abandon the system of relays, so far as the females and young persons under the age of 18 were concerned.

Delegations proposed this course to Grey and Russell on 21 February, but their meetings were unsatisfactory. However, the *Manchester Examiner* adopted the demand, which was widely publicised. The reformers were increasingly alarmed. 'The Ten Hours law is in jeopardy', Ashley wrote in his diary :

Some of the masters, a small, thank God, though powerful minority, have discovered a means of evasion. The Government say that they cannot prevent it, and they will, therefore, legalise it! Here is fresh toil, fresh anxiety. Wish to God it were settled for ever.

Oastler agreed that the evaders were 'a small band of cruel, despotic, mercenary and selfish masters, aided by brother rebels on the bench of justice'. He still hoped that another agitation would be unnecessary; Government must act. But ³⁷

If agitation we must have, we will strive that it may be peaceable; but in the present state and circumstances of the people . . . none can tell where agitation may end. Our motto will be The Law and No Surrender. . . . If there be cause for blame, it will rest with that Government which refuses to enforce the law.

III

Although the Lancashire reformers had been roused to anger, the situation was confused and various counsels were given. Hindley advised local negotiation and action. Oastler told workers to look to Parliament. Stephens, while supporting Oastler, was doubtful enough of any organisation associated with Hindley to be willing at least to encourage a rival agitation. And Fielden, too ill to speak in public, wrote to Manchester and Burnley workers against strikes, but advised them to announce publicly that they would not work longer than ten hours; and he asked sympathetic masters to aid the operatives.³⁸ Obviously, Fielden was now alarmed. He asked William Rand to help the Lancashire movement, but Rand felt — as Walker explained — that 'the whole affair belonged to Lancashire, no breaches of the law having been attempted in [his] neighbourhood'.³⁹ On 30 March women at Leach's mill left work after 10 hours, and Leach, Bayley, Cheetham and other Ashton and Stalybridge masters retaliated with lockouts and dismissals.⁴⁰ The reformers' last weapon seemed to be useless.

Stephens was still concerned with old campaigns. 'The New Poor Law is an abortion, hideous and horrible', he wrote. 'It is rotting away. It has never been carried out, and never can be.' But after losing his seat on the local board, he concentrated on reporting local relays, long hours and victimisation; even William Halliwell, an old supporter of Sadler's Bill, was now working his Delph mill for 14 hours daily. Stephens predicted a 'Tussle for the Ten Hours Bill', and in the early spring an angry new agitation developed, with meetings at Manchester, Ashton, Oldham, Stalybridge, Burnley, Stockport and Bradford — where unequalled 'zeal and combination of purpose' was reported. Oastler advised memorialising the Queen, while Fielden, Ashley and Hindley still appealed to Grey.⁴¹ On 19 February a delegation had called on Grey and Russell, who, Grant reported,

received us kindly. . . . Sir George Grey appeared not to approve of the shifting or relay system. I am decidedly of opinion that they will not sanction any alteration of the law.

The group also visited Walter and other allies. But eight days later Hindley told Fielden that Grey would soon introduce a Bill: ⁴²

I strongly suspect mischief. . . . I am fearful that they are going to sanction the relay system.

Early in March Grant reported that the masters were gaining support for '11 hours with the restriction on the moving power', for which Hugh Shaw's spinners had voted 'by a very large majority'. On Fielden's orders, Grant persuaded Shaw's men to reverse their decision, by 24 votes to 3.⁴³ And Ashley told Grant,⁴⁴

I do not believe that the Government intend to propose any Bill *at present*. You should lose no time in collecting all the evidence you can to show the good working of the Act.

On 14 April a conference was held in Manchester, under Hargreaves, for this purpose. Delegates represented two Manchester groups, two loom overlookers' groups and the Bolton, Waterhead Mill, Astley Bridge, Warrington, Burnley, Manchester, Heywood, Todmorden, Rochdale, Mossley, Ashton, Dukinfield, Hyde, Stalybridge, Stockport, Oldham, Bury and

Tyldesley committees ; Preston, Halifax, Bradford and Glasgow sent messages. Hindley spoke with his usual mixture of anxiety and sympathy :

The man in a factory is not free. And yet I tell you most candidly that to persuade the House of Commons to legislate for adult males, in the present society, would be absolutely futile.

But he called for a resolute defence of the Act.

Next day, the delegates reported on conditions in their areas. Manchester coarse spinners stated that relays drove women to public houses during the intervals. At Warrington and Bolton only single mills worked above 10 hours, although the Ashworths used relays. But at Ashton, where 20 of 26 mills worked long hours, many workers had been compelled to leave the Mechanics' Institute. Wage reductions were reported from Warrington, Preston, Heywood and Bolton, and stability or increases at Manchester, Todmorden and Burnley. On the motion of Mills of Oldham, Pitt of Ashton and Nuttall of Stockport, it was resolved to revive the old organisation ; and Johnson and Mawdsley called for weekly subscriptions of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for a central fund against victimisation. A further memorial was sent to Grey and Russell.⁴⁵

Still hoping, though with declining optimism, for Government action, Oastler and Stephens avoided the movement organised by Hindley and Mawdsley. And the ailing Fielden joined Ashley and seven masters in calling on Grey on 24 May, to present a memorial from 605 employers and petitions from 170 Dukinfield overlookers and 600 Ashton carders and rovers. Fielden urged Lancashire workers to be firm but peaceful, to raise the victimisation fund — which could reach £65,000 within a year — and to avoid any violence, which would injure the cause.⁴⁶ This was his last service ; he died at Skegness on 29 May. Loyal, knowledgeable and generous, he had long played a vital role. His death at this juncture, as a new menace rose against his Act, was a serious blow to the reformers.

IV

Early in June, Bright, Cobden and Ashworth led a delegation of Lancashire masters to the Home Office. According to the

Manchester Guardian, Grey — who had been urgently requested by the Inspectors to 'provide a remedy' — promised to legalise relays, while Ashley promised to support a compromise of 10½ or 11 hours, if the operatives agreed. This news was announced to Northern reformers as 'Ministerial Treachery to the Ten Hours Bill'.⁴⁷ Ashley bitterly observed that the Act was 'nullified by fraud and abused justice' and would now be 'annihilated by open legislation'. He denied the *Guardian's* astonishing report, though not in an entirely reassuring manner. He had met two masters, and insisted that the Act was 'now the property and right of the factory workers', who must decide their own policy; but he had ⁴⁸

added that, as far as he was concerned, he would be ready to consider the proposal of ten hours and a half of labour, provided that labour were taken between the hours of 6 and 6, and probably accede to it, if such were the views of workers in factories. Of an *Eleven hours Bill* he spoke as an arrangement utterly inadmissible. . . .

This offer was made without any consultation with Northern leaders, and from this time many reformers suspected their Parliamentary leader.

John Wood, William Walker and John Fielden's son, Samuel, visited Grey and Ashley, to protest against any compromise. But Northern reactions varied. Grant was reported to have told Grey that the operatives were considering a General Strike, which Mawdsley and the remnants of the Lancashire committee elected in 1846 certainly threatened.⁴⁹ While aiding the committee against the compromisers, Stephens and Oastler still opposed striking, although Stephens declared,

let masters and government withdraw or tamper with the Ten Hours Bill at their peril! Attempt to alter it, and the cry will be EIGHT, or for *no time at all*. The Ten Hours Bill is the last hold which the law has upon the people.

Oastler also believed that 'unless something be done now, the Ten Hours Bill will be lost'.⁵⁰ Consequently, by midsummer there were three groups among the reformers: Ashley was prepared to compromise; Stephens stood by the Act; and the Central Committee, closely associated with the spinners' disputes, talked of strike action.

In July Oastler and Stephens called for a general revival of the Movement, while Hindley performed another political somersault by advocating some agreement with the masters. Leaving his convalescent retreat at Broadstairs, Oastler joined Fielden's brother James, of Dobroyd Castle, and sons, Sam, John and Joshua, in starting the agitation in the Todmorden Oddfellows' Hall, on 10 July. Resolutions demanded the full Act, and memorials were sent to the Queen and Parliament.⁵¹ Two days later, at a great rally in the Manchester Free Trade Hall, the chairman, Huntingdon, opposed the compromise plan of Bazley, Lewis Williams and Sir Elkanah Armitage :

There ought to be undeviating adherence to the law of the land, to the Ten Hours Act, and no compromise whatever. . . . The provisions of the Ten Hours Act ought to be carried out fully, for the sake of religion, morality and humanity.

But letters from absent supporters revealed acute divisions. Brotherton and Aglionby 'recommended an amicable agreement', Feversham supported firmness and Ferrand was ready to repeat his 'sacrifices of time and money' for 20 years, to preserve the Act.

The Manchester speeches revealed further disagreements. When George Johnson and Hargreaves called for a 10 hours' day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., Hindley opposed them in a typically ambiguous speech. He supported Ashley rather than Brotherton, who appeared to want a 63 hours' week ; and he claimed that he had thought of a Bill against relays but had been dissuaded by the Central group :

Now, don't mistake me ; I am not for any more hours than 10, but I am exceedingly anxious that masters and men should try those hours which, being agreed upon, would be found more beneficial than any number of hours which the two parties disapproved of.

In reply, the 33-year-old Sam Fielden called for further campaigning and mocked Hindley's hopes for Parliamentary action. If Ashley supported 61 hours, he was 'no friend of theirs' ; and Fielden bluntly declared,

If you, the operatives of Lancashire, choose to take 61 hours as a settlement, I won't.

One Michael Paxton and Philip Knight then condemned evasions, and Oastler opposed any compromise, declaring that Hindley

might as well have said we have no law against murder, because now and then we hear of a murder being committed.

Oastler recalled Free Traders' past pledges and derisively quoted Ashworth's recent query to Hindley — 'Dost thou think I am bound by a speech made 6 years ago?' The important meeting closed by deciding to memorialise the Queen, canvass sympathetic Peers and Bishops and revive the committees.⁵²

'It is impossible to look upon the present position of the factory operatives without sympathy and admiration', declared the *Halifax Guardian*,⁵³

Badgered by selfish masters, betrayed by lawless magistrates, deserted by a powerless government, they still hold fast to the law of mercy and justice and humanity. . . . The people are taking a stand as conservatives of the law and the constitution.

During July, Stephens, Oastler and the Fieldens called for 'Ten Hours and No Surrender' at Oldham, Bolton, Burnley and Preston. They were horrified by the 'treason' of old allies, and Stephens bitterly assailed

the unsteadiness, time-serving and tergiversation of such men as Lord Ashley, Brotherton and Hindley [as] inglorious, inconsistent, miserable (and) contemptible.

The little group set out to reorganise the Movement, especially the Ashton and other committees associated with Hindley's compromise plan. When Hindley apologetically withdrew his scheme, Stephens insisted that his 'opportunities for repeating this perilous course must be curtailed'; Stephens⁵⁴

was sufficiently acquainted with the object of James Turner's recent visit to the factory districts, and with the manner in which the members of certain short-time committees had been tampered with, to assert that the Ten Hours cause had narrowly escaped shipwreck.

The principal speakers at the summer rallies were complementary to each other. Oastler, the white-haired *doyen* of the Movement, spoke of the moral problems of a quarrel 'not of

their seeking'. James Fielden, at 61 an experienced Radical master, and his three energetic nephews, who had reverted to their grandfather's Toryism, provided finance and practical support. At Stockport the 22-year-old Joshua attacked Ashley's group, who 'wanted to wheedle them out of the Ten Hours Act'; but

he did not, of himself, know exactly how to advise the people of Stockport, further than to keep aloof from all compromise. . . .

Stephens declared a 'Holy War' on the relay system. 'Down with it', he roared at Burnley, 'or else away to jail or the hulks with those who persist in resorting to it.' Anglican clergy also gave valuable aid. The vicar of Preston opposed any compromise, asserting that since the Act was passed he had had more night scholars and production had not declined. B. M. Hutchinson, vicar of Warrington, supported the Act on 3 August, as 'a blow at Mammon [which] opposed and obstructed the present system of making haste to be rich and of being rich overmuch'. On 10 August Oastler and Stephens spoke in the Stalybridge Town Hall, under the Rev. J. Chadwick, and Stephens declared that

from the very beginning, oppression had marked every step taken by the [Stalybridge] masters in the pursuit of dishonest gain. . . .

In retaliation, the masters called Stephens a Puseyite Tory! At Hebden Bridge 'Democratic Chapel' on 18 August, Stephens rebuked the only group of clergy not supporting the campaign. The weak Oastler had addressed fifteen meetings in five weeks before returning to London; and he sent a final letter advising Northern workers to report all evasions and avoid all compromise.⁵⁵

For some time, Ashley's attitude was uncertain. Hindley claimed that 'his Lordship recommended a compromise to 10½ hours', and Oastler sadly noted that Ashley had not disowned it. One John Haigh asked Ashley whether he had in fact deserted the cause. 'You are under a misapprehension', Ashley replied: he still supported the Act, but was willing, 'if the operatives were so disposed', to consider 10½ hours, in return for the limitation of labour between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The decision rested with the operatives.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the new organisation was growing: the

re-formed Todmorden branch claimed 2000 members in late August. But the Central Committee was also active, and on 26 August Mawdsley and Grant summoned a conference in the 'Woodman's Hut' at Manchester. The 63 delegates, under Hargreaves, allegedly constituted 'the most numerous and influential' of conferences, but were dominated by the 20 members of the self-perpetuating 'Central' group — and the 'Oastlerite' committees were not invited. A vaguely phrased manifesto *To the Operatives of England, Ireland and Scotland* called on operatives to offer 'passive resistance to all masters who were violating the law'. There was talk of 'taking matters into their own hands' and a plan for a fighting fund, with the absent Thomas Fielden as treasurer; strikes were apparently being planned.⁵⁷

Such schemes divided the men still defending the Act. 'Men of the Mills, Look Out and Beware!' wrote Stephens, who strongly opposed striking: 'The Central Committee has a great deal to answer for and will have to be brought to account.' Abel Shaw of Ashton protested at the conference's unbalanced composition, strike threats and rudeness to old leaders. And Oastler, on receiving the news from Sam Fielden, issued an announcement *To the Factory Workers of England, Ireland and Scotland*, expressing dismay at the strike call, which Thomas Fielden and the recent meetings had opposed: 'the most sure way to endanger the Ten Hours Act was to turn out!' He believed that a peaceful agitation would make Government act, and claimed that it had already converted opponents in Salford, Colne, Haslingden and Rochdale. 'Again he urged patience. The judges would soon settle the question — if indeed there were any question to settle.'⁵⁸

Mawdsley hotly answered Oastler, whom he considered 'ungenerous and unjust' to the Central Committee. He denied supporting a strike policy, though Oastler and Fielden had done so. The Movement was now hopelessly rent. It was essential, proclaimed Stephens, 'effectually to weed out all Ashley-compromisers and Hindley-coat-buttoners'; and in September he called for an entirely new organisation, declaring

There is really no use striving, as we have done, if the private agents and friends of compromisers and traitors are to work the machinery of all our Short-Time Committees.

On 15 September Stephens opposed the strike-call at Stalybridge. But next day the Bolton Trades Central Committee held a Stalybridge meeting to organise sympathetic strikes in Stalybridge, Hyde and Newton Moor. Even Mawdsley, representing the Central Committee, opposed action at that time. When he went on to attack Stephens, John Avison, a local schoolmaster, defended him and Oastler. Avison foiled the attempt to extend the Bolton strikes, and condemned the 'Central' men for associating the questions of wages and hours. Subsequently, Mawdsley, Grant and Hargreaves denied ever having advocated strikes, but Stephens warned operatives against their ambiguous language.⁵⁹ In late September the Bolton strikers returned to work, on Oastler's advice.

The new Movement held its first conference at Bury on 16 September, when the rules of the 'Association for the Protection and Enforcement of John Fielden's Ten Hours Act' were adopted. This 'Fielden Society' was a federation of autonomous local bodies, which were to report and prosecute factory offenders. It included middle-class sympathisers and, in contrast to the unrepresentative Central Committee, had a democratic constitution and a subscribing membership, contributing 1d. on entry and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. weekly for a victimisation fund. The Society existed to protect the Act and oppose compromise; and it planned a test case on relays in the Court of Queen's Bench. Sam Fielden was elected President, with Mallalieu as deputy. The Council consisted of John Cobbett, John Fielden, William Taylor of Crompton, Fletcher, Thomas Livesey, David Mills of Heywood and Alexander Taylor of Oldham. Mallalieu was chairman of the general committee, which controlled finance and consisted of Joseph Hurst of Todmorden, Joseph Butterworth of Heywood, William Meadowcroft of Bury and John Ashworth of Littleborough; Mills was corresponding secretary, Howarth of Rochdale financial secretary and Livesey general treasurer.⁶⁰ Avison formed a Stalybridge branch, and Stephens founded societies at Bacup on 27 September — aided by the vicar, William Tatlock, and a Baptist minister, Thomas Dawson — at Middleton on 17 October and at Crompton on 25 October, supported by William Taylor, a sympathetic master.⁶¹

Stephens maintained his attacks on the decaying Central

Committee, especially condemning its 'infamy' in insulting 'the most heroic, devoted and suffering champion', Oastler, who had 'saved the situation' by stopping the strikes. When Clitheroe strikes failed, with considerable victimisation, Stephens again blamed Mawdsley's group.⁶² Oastler helped the agitation by appealing for support in *The Times*. But Ashley watched developments bitterly:

Mr. Oastler and Mr. Stephens had seized the opportunity to revile him and place themselves at the head of the operatives; but he rejoiced to say that the operatives would neither believe them nor accept them. . . .

He soon learned that the movement was stronger than he thought. 'Mr. Oastler and a crew of others (I can use no milder term)', he wrote on 1 November,⁶³

including Sam Fielden (why he?) are denouncing and reviling me in every society, by day and night, in speech and on paper, as a traitor and a thousand other things, to the Ten Hours Bill. God knows my sincerity, my labours, vexations, losses, injuries to health, fortune, comfort, position, in that cause. . . . I am too busy, and also too tired, to begin a controversial defence. . . .

During November new Fielden societies were established at Wardle, Clitheroe, Heywood, Hebden Bridge, Newton Moor, Rochdale, Burnley, Littleborough and Ashton, generally after rallies addressed by Stephens. His *Chronicle* closed with the 73rd issue on 3 November, and was replaced by *The Champion*, which contained articles by Stephens and Oastler and publicised a new anti-Truck agitation started at Derby by Jeremiah Briggs, a solicitor and insurance agent.⁶⁴ On Sunday, 11 November, Fieldenite delegates assembled in the Queen's Hotel at Todmorden, to plan the test case, arrange the central fund and adopt Stephens' *Champion* as their official organ.⁶⁵ They had the usual religious support: in November Stalybridge clergy and ministers petitioned the Queen against relays.

V

As the agitation grew, Oastler began a new task. Protectionist hopes were reviving around a policy of defending 'Protestant

Institutions' and reducing taxation. In December Manners told his brother, Granby, that 'Oastler was the one engine by which the Manufacturing Districts could be worked', and Oastler planned 'a very weighty scheme . . . no less than an attempt to unite the working-classes of London against Free Trade, &c.'⁶⁶ The campaign started inauspiciously, when Oastler was shouted down in Stepney, on 7 January 1850; but he persevered. 'He was for progress', he told Trades delegates at Holborn, on 20 February:

But when the men of progress only showed him changes which made the cunning man rich and the simple man poor, he told them it was the progress of pickpockets and could not be admitted among honest men.

He opposed improvements which sacrificed a few for the many, for 'Society was composed of many fews, of many individuals . . .'.⁶⁷

While mobilising Metropolitan Protectionist opinion, Oastler gained fresh allies for factory reform. He supported the Operative Bakers Association's agitation for shorter hours; and the *Bakers' Gazette* thereafter supported the Lancashire campaign. Oastler was not unduly optimistic: 'any interference with labour and capital was contrary to the present national feeling', he warned the bakers' secretary. But his Protectionism remained comprehensive: 'the sheet anchor' was 'the law of order and regulation, which meant Protection for all'.⁶⁸ In the new circle of supporters lay the embryo of the national organisation of which he had long dreamed. But he never lost touch with the North. When Cobden threatened the new Protectionism in December, Oastler replied that 'Manchester money and Manchester faggot votes — not 36,000 West Riding electors — were [Cobden's] real constituents', and attacked Free Trade for making 'a few millionaires and millions of paupers'. As the League had used 'cooked statistics' and barred operatives from its meetings, Oastler proposed that he should debate the issue in Yorkshire with Cobden. He also attacked Cobden's allies, who broke Fielden's Act; and he wrote regularly for *The Champion*, on religion, the Poor Law and against emigration schemes, which a Lancashire conference planned in December.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, relations between Oastler's friends and Mawdsley's Manchester rump rapidly deteriorated. The enigmatic Grant linked the 'Central Committee', now denying all militancy, with Ashley, while Hindley wavered, as usual. Generally, the group considered an extra half-hour a reasonable price for abolishing relays, while the Fielden Society thought the proposal an ignoble surrender. Early in January Sam Fielden advocated reunion, and a joint conference was planned for Sunday, 13 January, in the 'Cotton Tree', when Fielden would be supported by William and Alexander Taylor, Jonathan Mellor, Stephens, Livesey, Fletcher and Joshua Milne. But at a preliminary meeting in the 'Spread Eagle' on Saturday, Fielden found that Mawdsley and Grant had chosen Ashley as the Parliamentary leader on Thursday. The Fieldenites demanded that this decision be expunged from the 'Central' minutes, and boycotted the conference. Fielden explained that the operatives 'must decide whether they would follow the man who attempted to betray them', and insisted that Richmond, Feversham, Ellesmere and Oxford were their best Parliamentary friends.⁷⁰

The delegates resolved to take no action, pending a general meeting of delegates and leaders. They generally supported Fielden, but Mawdsley omitted the discussion from the conference report, whereupon Stephens condemned the 'self-elected council' and warned the workers against trusting Ashley. Stephens was glad to find 'increasing dissatisfaction' with the 'Central Committee', which had

been used by certain individuals for very questionable ends, which, when made officially public, could not fail to stamp the parties privy to them with lasting dishonour.

Consequently, the two groups remained separate. Yet both advocated the same policy of altering the 26th clause of Graham's Act, in case the courts allowed relays. The principal difference was that while the Manchester group had accepted Ashley's leadership on 11 January, a Fielden Society conference at Ashton on the 27th rejected him. Almost certainly, Grant was responsible for this division. But Todmorden operatives now again demanded restriction of the power, as 'the only efficient means of preventing violations'.⁷¹

The Inspectors had long hoped to test magisterial decisions. But the 69th clause of the 1844 Act limited appeals to cases punishable by imprisonment or fines above £3 (the amount fixed for overworking young persons); the only way to obtain a hearing in a superior court was by arrangement with a manufacturer. Consequently, an action was brought against David Mills of Heywood by Horner's sub-inspector, Thomas Dudley Ryder, with J. M. Cobbett prosecuting; and on 31 October 1849 Mills agreed to a conviction in a penalty of £5.⁷² Three days later Mills gave notice of appeal.

At first the reformers felt certain of victory: Oastler ⁷³

could not picture the possibility of an English court . . . sanctioning an interpretation of law which would consign thousands to a lingering death.

Most hopes were still high as the case went before the Court of Exchequer on 28 January. But Ashley did not share the optimism. 'Judges will decide adversely', he noted sadly, ' . . . and thus legalise relays!' The Attorney-General had told him ⁷⁴

They will give judgment not according to law but on policy. Judge Parke, he added, observed to me, 'I have no doubt that the framers of the Act intended that the labour should be continuous, but, as it is a law to restrain the exercise of capital and property, it must be construed stringently'.

The hearing ended on 5 February, and Baron Parke delivered his judgment three days later. After explaining 'the established rules for the construction of statutes', he announced that

we do not think that there are words in the statutes sufficiently plain and clear to render the conduct of the defendant . . . liable to punishment.

Parke agreed that the starting-time of the first young person should be counted for all young persons in the factory, and that all should have the same meal-breaks. But Parliament had not provided for a simultaneous ending, although 'nothing was more easy'. Such a clause would have protected young workers, as Parliament intended, but also involved 'a larger sacrifice' by owners; and Parke 'could not assume that Parliament would

disregard so important a consideration'. Baron Alderson concurred.⁷⁵

The Ten Hours Act was thus virtually demolished, and disappointment, anger and bewilderment spread among the reformers. *The Times* considered that the decision 'turned the statute . . . into a mere nullity' and hoped that Ashley would propose a Bill, to remedy 'the clumsiness or carelessness of the framers of the statute'. Ashley was under no delusions: 'Great remedial measure, the Ten Hours Act, nullified', he recorded. 'The work to be done all over again: and I 17 years older than when I began. . . .' On 12 February he asked the Government to take action, but Grey could not decide how to proceed.⁷⁶ From the North, Horner told his daughter that there was a 'very great deal of excitement among the factory operatives' after 'the cruel disappointment to their hopes'; but he thought Parliament would now be compelled to act: ⁷⁷

The Government has behaved in a very discreditable way. . . . If they attempt to infringe upon the Ten Hours Act, they will be assuredly beaten sooner or later, for it has taken deep root in the good opinion of the operatives.

Both Lancashire groups were roused by the news. Sam Fielden, ill in London, told *The Times* that 'the whole of the Factory Acts were useless after this decision'. He 'asserted with confidence' that

under this system, now declared legal by the judges, I could deceive the inspectors, even if one of them stood at the door of every mill I am connected with.

Mawdsley's 'Central Committee for the Protection of the Ten Hours Act' called a conference in Manchester for 17 February, and Mawdsley promised ⁷⁸

to hold no communication with any man who would seek a compromise which, in any way, would deprive them of the full measure. . . .

Nevertheless, on the same day Mawdsley invited Ashley to the conference.⁷⁹ Ashley could not attend, but advised the operatives ⁸⁰

firmly, perseveringly and respectfully to maintain their rights . . . of a limitation to 10 hours a day for all young persons.

The 'Central' group appeared, indeed, to have strengthened its attitude. 'The crisis is at hand', wrote Mawdsley, urging reformers 'to be active and vigilant, revive all their committees and prepare for the good fight' in 'the most severe struggle'.⁸¹

Throughout Lancashire the committees rallied to petition for 'a clear and intelligible Ten Hours Act', and large public meetings were held in Manchester, Bolton, Blackburn, Preston, Oldham, Salford and Bury. Balme asked Yorkshire groups to support 'their noble friend and advocate, Lord Ashley' in 'this time of trial', by petitioning against the 'odious system of shifts and relays' and in favour of the 'intellectual, religious and domestic advantages of the Act'. Bradford and Calverley clergy petitioned the Queen. Few operatives would accept Engels' consolation that 'the cup . . . though bitter, must be drunk', as a means of speeding the revolution.⁸² Stephens was foremost in the protests, calling for 'a Ten Hours Bill that could not be broken'; Parke had made thirty years' work 'virtually abortive'. Stephens still distrusted Mawdsley's group, and hoped that 'some honest and far more capable man' would succeed the 'incompetent, vacillating, time-serving [and] treacherous' Ashley. And the Bill must restrict the power and provide heavier penalties.⁸³ But the immediate issue was the Parliamentary leadership, which was to be settled at the conference.

On 16 February Thomas, John and Joshua Fielden, John Wood, William Walker, Rawson, Stephens, William Taylor and Richard Cobbett met Mawdsley's committee in the 'Spread Eagle', to attempt to formulate a common policy. After an argument over Ashley, it was decided to make no recommendation to the delegates. The only important news was Ashley's reported statement that

the Prime Minister and Home Secretary had had the meanness to wait upon him to ask him to agree on the part of the operatives to an 11 hours bill, which proposal [he] refused to accede to, but ultimately agreed to recommend to the operatives to accept a bill for 10½ hours per day.

This news scarcely reassured the Fielden Society; Oastler, Bull and Ferrand sent messages supporting the Act.⁸⁴

Next day 220 delegates from 26 committees assembled in the 'Cotton Tree', under Hargreaves of the 'Central

Committee'; but the pressure of numbers compelled a move to the People's Institute. The topics of discussion were a declaratory Bill, the Parliamentary leadership, the selection of delegates and the possibility of another campaign. Oastler, invited by both groups, came 'contrary to his own feelings and judgment' and refused to intervene; but,

standing as he did as a sort of link between the last and the coming generation, [he would] endeavour to infuse into the next agitation . . . the heart-thoughts of their departed leaders, Sadler and Fielden . . . and the former opinions of Lord Ashley. . . .

After Oastler's retirement, the delegates rejected a restriction of power, and called for 'a simple declaratory Bill'. Various speakers put forward the claims of Ashley, Manners and Banks to the leadership. The antipathy between Ashley and Banks was raised as an objection, but hailed as a useful balance. After Grant had defended Ashley and promised that he would not 'compromise', his motion for a triumvirate of all three was accepted, with Feversham and Ellesmere in the Lords. Four operatives were selected as delegates to London. There followed 'a long and somewhat stormy discussion' on the conduct of the 'Central Committee', and it was resolved to reconstruct it 'on a more equitable and satisfactory basis'. Oastler then returned to deliver a bitter attack on Grey's statement that both sides of industry supported relays.⁸⁵ He was enthusiastically received and the fatal breach was apparently healed.

But exactly a week later Mawdsley held a second conference of 30 selected delegates, invited by private ticket, to repair 'the insult offered to Lord Ashley'. Hargreaves again presided, in the 'Cotton Tree', and Grant was again to the fore. It was resolved that the first assembly had been unfairly packed 'by a few persons not at all connected with factories, and who appeared to be dividing the workmen with a view of prolonging the agitation'. Despite protests by Fielden — who 'would follow the operatives if they went right, [and] if they went wrong could not follow them' — it was resolved, again on Grant's motion, to appoint Ashley as sole leader.⁸⁶ A Manchester meeting on 28 February decided on standard petitions and resolutions, and questionnaires were prepared by the 'Central Committee', on the benefits of the Act.⁸⁷

While Mawdsley arranged support for Ashley, Fielden's supporters protested at the trickery of the 'Central' group. Stephens bitterly attacked Grant and Ashley; it was

only to the fortunate circumstance of his Lordship's exclusion from Parliament, during the session of 1847, that the operatives were indebted for the passing of the bill at all. . . . And now again, by means of his own private agent his Lordship seeks to become the sole depository of the power to do what he will with the Ten Hours Bill. We never knew anything more dishonourable than his Lordship's conduct in this particular. . . .

Oastler more moderately pointed out the contradictions in Mawdsley's case. The decisions of conference — 'the body that had ever been recognised as the highest authority in the movement' — had been overthrown. The same chairman presided over both meetings, and if unauthorised persons really attended the first conference, Hargreaves should have rejected their credentials; and if Ashley really was insulted, he should have stopped the debate. Oastler insisted that ⁸⁸

The Lancashire Central Committee had usurped the supreme control of affairs and had actually attempted, without even consulting the people, to overthrow the delegate meeting of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and to make itself the irresponsible head of the movement!, thereby attempting to change the whole organisation.

Sam Fielden was equally angered by the rejection of the decisions of 'the most numerous and influential meeting of factory delegates ever known to have been assembled', by Mawdsley's 'pretended delegate meeting'. He had 'consulted with the well-known friends of the cause' and called upon all delegates at the first conference to re-assemble in a Manchester music hall on 3 March, 'to give full effect to their already-recorded Resolutions'. He declared that, ⁸⁹

So far as in me lies, I am resolved that nothing shall retard the progress of our just cause, and that no person or set of persons shall be permitted to sow the seeds of discord and division in our hitherto united ranks.

Meanwhile, Yorkshire delegates, meeting at Bradford on 24 February, urged the Lancashire men 'to unite with each

other most heartily for the speedy attainment of their common object'. But Stephens was determined that the 'Central Committee' should not dictate to the Movement: 'this time, the truth would be plainly spoken'. An Oldham rally expressed 'surprise and indignation' at Mawdsley's policy, which was 'unworthy of the confidence of the working people'.⁹⁰ The 'Central Committee' was also disowned at Manchester, Ashton, Bolton, Heywood, Stalybridge, Macclesfield and other meetings. Some 1100 operatives rallied under Knowles in the Bolton Temperance Hotel, with eleven clergy and ministers, to condemn relays and support the new agitation. And 2000 people met in Manchester Corn Exchange, under Canon Wray, to hear John, Thomas and Sam Fielden and Stephens declare their personal support for an 8 hours' day. Oastler could not help in person, but wrote pungent attacks on the 'knot of unauthorised men' at Manchester, and promised his aid to 'the most abject slaves on earth, the factory slaves of Stalybridge'.⁹¹

On 3 March some 150 delegates, together with the Fieldens, Pitkeithley, Stephens and Mallalieu, met in Manchester, under Philip Knight. Committees at Manchester, Chorlton, Oldham, Crompton, Ashton, Preston, Rochdale, Heywood, Todmorden, Bury, Padiham, Stalybridge, Hyde, Newton Moor, Hebden Bridge, Dukinfield, Droylsden, Littleborough, Bacup, Cuerden and Dewsbury were represented. Stephens read a memorial by Sam Fielden, stating that

It was difficult, even, to find out who and what the Central Committee was. Mr. Grant, who, I understand, was not a member of that committee, I met at every turn, acting for it and in its name; but otherwise, I had some difficulty in ascertaining that the committee had a material existence; indeed, I still have some doubt if it has any existence apart from Mr. Grant. . . .

He recalled that the 'Central' group had issued an address 'which we all thought calculated to cause a general turn out', which would have been disastrous; and that it attacked Oastler when he opposed this policy. He urged the delegates to carry out the resolutions of 17 February. The conference proceeded, with 5 dissentients, to disown the 'Central Committee' and unanimously confirmed the first resolutions, called for the triple leadership, asked Richard Cobbett to prepare a new Bill and

Oastler and Stephens to address meetings, decided to canvass M.P.s and set up a provisional committee, pending the election of a new central executive.⁹² Grant promptly issued a protest against these proceedings, as an insult to Ashley.⁹³ The breach between the two sections of Lancashire reformers was now complete.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FINALE

DESPITE their bitter divisions, the Ten Hours men mounted a big campaign in the spring of 1850 for a Bill to prevent relays. Preston operatives met in the Exchange Rooms on 14 March, under their vicar, Owen Parr. The local Liberal Members, Strickland and C. P. Grenfell, pledged support, while Patten and James Heywood of North Lancashire were unwilling to commit themselves.¹ Dewsbury reformers rallied under their vicar in the Wellington Tavern on 11 March, and the Leeds men met next day in the court-house, supported by Hook and 16 of his clergy, 8 Wesleyan ministers, a Baptist and 16 surgeons, including Smith and Hey. A week later, Edwards and Walker held a Halifax meeting in the Oddfellows' Hall; and Oastler wrote to the secretary, John Sunderland, against Mawdsley's group and Grey — 'an inveterate foe . . . the slave of the cotton lords'. Balme's Yorkshire committees were again active, for Parke's judgment would allow relays everywhere.² Four operatives were sent to join Walker and Rand at Westminster.

Following the provisional Central Committee's orders, Richard Cobbett had a Bill prepared by his brother John and Barnes Peacock, 'so that [Ashley] could have no excuse for delay or bringing in a bad Bill'. He sent the draft to Ashley, Manners and Bankes on 13 March, but received no acknowledgement from Ashley. Next day Ashley moved for leave to introduce a Bill, quoting a manager as saying that 'the factory law had never worked so oppressively to the operatives'. Edwards seconded him, and Brotherton presented a petition from 26,765 Manchester workers against relays. Bright opposed the motion, but Graham himself said that he had intended to 'prohibit absolutely and peremptorily the shift and relay system in any form whatever', by his Act of 1844. The Bill was read on 19 March.³

Ashley's measure was drawn up by Charles Bellenden Ker,

the legal reformer and conveyancer; but Ashley so altered it that Ker 'hoped that it was not supposed in Manchester that it was his, as it was enough to ruin the character of any man'. Richard Cobbett instantly told Ashley that he thought it 'very questionable, at least, if it would effect the object sought', and suggested that counsel should discuss means of strengthening it. But after three letters, Ashley merely replied that the clause would be amended.⁴ He was apparently unwilling to have any dealings with the new Central Committee.

The North was ignorant of these troubles. Even Stephens commended Ashley's speech — which Milner Gibson condemned as 'socialist and sentimental in tone'. But on 19 March the Cotton Spinners' Association resolved that the Bill 'should be vigorously opposed' by 'a powerful deputation' in London.⁵ And Government favoured the masters' case. Ashley found that Grey

would not interdict relays, and by permitting them, enables manufacturers to work for 11 hours; why this? All has prospered under the ten hours, why thus propitiate Bright and Ashworth? Evasions would be universal, detection impossible.

Ashley considered Grey 'fearful, vacillating, showing no principle',⁶ and told Grant of his difficulties. But Mawdsley still called for support of Ashley's Bill. 'You will see that the enemy is in the field', he wrote on 21 March,

and that it is of the utmost importance that you should bestir yourselves. Above all, get your town and mill petitions prepared. . . . There is not a moment to be lost: a last and final effort must now be made to settle the question, and settle it for ever. . . . On the subject of funds we must also urge you to activity. . . .

Five days later, however, Grant admitted that 'upon a careful examination', the Bill 'had been found to be not sufficiently stringent'. He sent altered versions to the committees, asking them to send comments to Mawdsley.⁷ This revised Bill had already been put before the House, during the report stage, on 22 March. It provided that the hours of protected workers (except children on afternoon shifts) should be reckoned continuously from the time when any of them started work, excluding only common meal-times.⁸

As Fielden's supporters learned of Ashley's rejection of the decisions of 17 February and 3 March, they protested strongly. 'From ignorance, conceit, pride or something worse', wrote Stephens, Ashley had refused the Cobbett Bill and proposed a 'wretchedly defective' measure, which would actually 'legalise and regulate' relays. Richard Cobbett protested that the Bill was entirely unsatisfactory. And Oastler condemned Ashley's 'injudicious and petulant' friends, who had exaggerated his sacrifices and now claimed that Brotherton and Hindley had planned the compromise with Armitage and Williams and tricked Ashley into believing that the workers supported it; Ashley 'was not the imbecile there presented'. Oastler summarised Northern feelings, acknowledging Ashley's services, regretting his compromise, disavowing any 'insult' and insisting that

The victory is not yet, our foe is powerful and cunning; but Lord John Manners has drawn the teeth of compromise. And in the struggle, our foolish, injudicious friends will find Lord Ashley no weaker by being well backed.

On Good Friday, 29 March, the new Central Committee, under Avison, condemned Ashley's Bill, and on 14 April, despite Grant's protests, the old committee carried a similar resolution.⁹

Meanwhile, on the Central Committee's orders, Cobbett insisted to Ashley that the Bill should retain the 10 hours, and again requested a meeting of counsel. Ashley now agreed to 'strengthen the clause . . . providing we did not introduce any new matter'; he had promised the House to promote only a declaratory Bill. He asked for Cobbett's proposals, which had been sent long ago. Cobbett

presumed that the undertaking not to introduce *new matter* meant that nothing beyond what was necessary to insure observance of the Factory Acts, *as they were intended to be*, should be introduced.

He showed that Ashley's Bill was not 'watertight', as it did not specifically forbid relays; and Peacock agreed, pointing to a possible ambiguity:

It does not state that the hours to be reckoned continuously, &c., shall be deemed hours of work, &c., but that the hours of work shall be reckoned continuously, &c., leaving it open to the court to say what is meant by 'the hours of work'.

Nor did it prevent children from working in two factories.¹⁰ The reformers were determined that the measure should be absolutely secure. Ill-health prevented Oastler from visiting the North, but he wrote open letters to the committees, attacks on Political Economy and the proposed Great Exhibition to Sir Charles Wood and Brougham, and six letters *To the Aristocracy of England*, against unregulated competition.¹¹ He also published a collection of speeches; but even he could not ease relations within the Movement.

Ashley still avoided the 'Fieldenites'; but when Mawdsley's group also condemned his Bill, his position was weakened. On 16 April Cobbett, supported by Manners and Bankes, persuaded Ashley to meet Ker and John Cobbett. Together, they planned a new Bill, to be drafted by Law, Ashley's lawyer. But after agreeing, Ashley feared that the proposal might violate his pledge. His position was increasingly difficult, and little understood in the North; but it was largely of his own creation. On 22 April William Rand gave him two clauses prepared by Isaac Butt, later the Home Rule leader, which Ashley also rejected.¹²

A new blow now weakened the cause. When the London delegates visited Walter, he advised them to compromise on 10½ hours, and on 25 April *The Times* published an inspired letter from 'A Manufacturer', recommending a 60 hours' week (10½ daily and 7½ on Saturday), worked between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. — 'which would effect the object more simply and more certainly than [Ashley's] plan'. *The Times* commended the proposal's 'temperance and moderation', and advised the operatives not to 'stickle upon a mere point of form'. The *Manchester Guardian* favoured the plan, claiming that it wished to end long hours —

and one great objection which we have always felt to the Ten Hours Act was the temptation which it held out to an evasion of its provisions. . . .

Ashley confessed to Mawdsley that his Bill would involve long delays; and

to urge a clause which appeared valueless and which might probably be violated immediately after it had received the Royal Assent, seemed absurd in itself and a waste of time.

He asked for the operatives' advice.¹³ Mawdsley still wanted an efficient Ten Hours Act, and on 30 April Ashley gave notice of his new clause, though obviously tempted to accept a compromise and relieve himself of the burden.

I

Other agitations were growing in the spring of 1850. Oastler and Augustus Delaforce led an expanding London Protectionist group. On 2 April Oastler presided over a bakers' rally in Brighton Town Hall, to support Lord Robert Grosvenor's Bill against nightwork; and on 2 May he spoke for the cause in Southwark. Bright and Cobden opposed this movement. On May Day a meeting in Dudley Town Hall began another movement against Truck, on which Jeremiah Briggs planned a general Act.¹⁴ Ferrand also returned to public life, as a speaker at agricultural rallies. But, despite alternative interests, the Northern committees broke into immediate protest against the compromise suggested in London. A Manchester conference, called by Mawdsley on 28 April, announced

that they never would submit to anything involving in the slightest degree a departure from the principle of the Ten Hours Act.

And Sam Fielden stressed the necessity of retaining his father's Act. But on 3 May Grey announced that the Government would adopt the 10½ hours compromise.¹⁵

Events now moved quickly. Oastler condemned the move as an unfair denial of the workers' rights, and even the Manchester rump refused to yield, on 6 May:¹⁶

The Government, whose duty it was to protect the weak, when oppressed by the strong, had declared their intention of battling on the side of wealth and avarice, and of propping up its evil dominion over justice and humanity.

But despite such strong words from the Manchester Corn Exchange, Ashley was attracted by the plan. 'Harassed day after day by this Factory Bill', he recorded on 7 May —

impossible to get a stringent clause to prohibit relays; tried many and failed; have resolved then, as only hope of getting anything good and secure for the operatives, to accept Government Amendments. I am sure that they are the best terms that ever will be

offered, and probably this is the last time of them being offered. I fear, too, division among the operatives, for, if some reject, some will accept the terms ; once divided, they are lost, the masters will effect an Eleven Hours Bill !

That day he told the committees that

I am bound to act as your friend, and not as your delegate ; and I counsel you, therefore, to accept forthwith the propositions made by Her Majesty's Government, as the only means of solving the difficulties in which we are now placed.

He believed that delay would be fatal and that the advantages were obvious :

The 2 hours are, I know, your unquestionable right ; but . . . the range of 15 hours is the unquestionable right of the employers : the exchange they offer is fair, and the gain is on your side. . . . It will be necessary to insert the word 'children' into the clause introduced by Sir George Grey, in order that the youngest workers may be sure to enjoy the benefit of the close of the daily labour at 6 o'clock.

Ashley expected 'a storm of violence and hatred' from the factory districts :

He might have taken a more popular and belauded course, but he would have ruined the question ; one more easy to himself, but far from *true* to the people.

He recorded that 'two considerations had greatly determined him' : Protectionist anger was now diminished, and neither side was 'striving for what was considered to be really essential' The proposal would add only two hours' labour weekly ; employers and operatives were 'struggling merely for victory ; no side chose to be beaten', and Ashley 'could not consent to be the tool'. Sixteen years later he remembered that ¹⁷

I assented on the ground that 20 years of well-balanced conflict showed that neither party could gain its full purpose ; and that compromise was the only solution. And the gain to the people was far beyond the concession to the employers. . . . This was recognised, at the very first, by very many of the operatives, and eventually by all. It moreover prevented a 'sore place' by giving neither party the absolute victory. . . .

The letter caused a furious outburst. The London delegates, under Thomas Pitt of Ashton, unanimously asserted that

'the Factory Workers would never consent to any variation . . . unless it be to further shorten the duration of labour'.¹⁸ Balme explained the situation to the Yorkshire committee, under Rawson, with William Walker and William Rand, in the Sun Hotel at Bradford on 12 May; his advice to support Manners, who promised to fight for Ten Hours, was accepted.¹⁹ The remaining Yorkshire committees at Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Keighley, Bingley and Todmorden rallied to this policy. Halifax reformers expressed 'surprise and grief', and, 'disagreeing entirely with Lord Ashley, would give to Lord John Manners their confidence and support'. Recalling Ashley's pledges to 'die in the last ditch', the *Halifax Guardian* condemned his ²⁰

betrayal of the cause to which, after many misgivings, he was again constituted the leader. . . . Better let robbers go unpunished than pass a law to give them a title to a part of their ill-gotten goods.

Lancashire delegates also met on 12 May, in the 'Cotton Tree', and, although Grant favoured the compromise, the majority supported Manners' policy. However, they decided that

the limitation of the factory day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. is a very important feature of factory legislation, and most desirable to be obtained; that an effort be now made to engraft upon that proposal the limitation of the hours of work to 10 hours per day, the undeniable right of the operatives; but, failing in that effort, the meeting will use no efforts to endanger the passing of the Government plan, reserving to ourselves the right of again demanding from the Legislature our just rights, in another Session of Parliament.

This was a strange change from the uncompromising position of the previous week; but the conference sent 'heartfelt thanks' for Manners' aid, when 'the base and deliberate treachery of our pretended friends seemed to have assured our defeat'.²¹

Naturally, the strongest anger was expressed by Fielden's group. Ashley should have told the delegates of his decision before *The Times*, wrote Oastler:

Then the antidote could have appeared with the poison. Twenty-four hours are thus unfairly gained!

He was certain that the operatives would reject the scheme. When Walter refused to publish his letter, Oastler sent copies to the committees, urging firmness. He bitterly reviewed Ashley's conduct:

Never was a man so deeply pledged, never so much trusted. Talk of the treachery of others — Lord Ashley has betrayed the poor.

Oastler called for maximum support of Manners and 'the gallant young champion', Edwards.²² Stephens alleged that Ashley 'had at length removed the mask of affected sympathy' and, with 'the most unparalleled baseness', had betrayed them. Only *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and Grant supported Ashley — and the *Guardian* was soon reprimanded by a mill-owner for going so far: the masters still supported 'the great principle [of] the non-interference of Government in industrial regulations'.²³

Ferrand's friend, the 31-year-old Manners, now became the Parliamentary leader, promising to move amendments to Grey's Bill. Parliamentary discussion was postponed on 9 May, and four days later the Bill was published, restricting women and young persons to a standard day between 6 and 6, but, as Ashley had noted, omitting children. However, Grey had promised to include children later, and Ashley felt no great anxiety, after a half-hearted attempt to introduce a variant of Cobbett's clause. Next day *The Times* contained another inspired article, planned, thought Oastler, by Grey and Ashley. Oastler told Mills

that if they resolve to take advantage of their own mistakes and rob the women and young persons in rectifying it, I will raise the standard of 'Ten Hours a day, with mealtimes included' — you know how the people will flock to it — I know that justice will then grant it. I am, however, content with the Ten Hours Act, if Parliament will be just.

He moved from Broadstairs to Fulham, to help in canvassing, and was again delighted by Edwards' staunch support.²⁴

Manners put his amendments on the order paper on 17 May, 'so that ample time would be given to allow the feelings of the operatives to be known . . .'.²⁵ Each committee promised 'to use every legitimate means' in his support, against the 'unjust and unreasonable attempt to deprive them of those leisure hours

which were intended for their religious, moral and domestic improvement'. The greatest meeting, called by Manners, Banks, March, P. H. Muntz, Bull, Crawford, Wakley, Duncombe, O'Connor, Edwards and Ferrand — who could not attend — for the new Central Committee, was held in Manchester Corn Exchange on 27 May. Some 900 operatives heard Oastler, Stephens, Fletcher, Sam and Thomas Fielden and Dean Wray attack Ashley's 'treachery' and Grey's 'complete piece of humbug', and talk of an 8 hours scheme; *The Times* condemned the 'fanaticism' of the speeches.²⁶ Walter, like Ashley, could not understand the hostility to slight extra labour; but the operatives saw no reason to concede anything.

On 6 June Ashley proposed to include children in the set day, but to his surprise the Government opposed him. Bright also condemned the proposal; he still hoped to legalise relays, and seconded Elliot's motion for a working day from 5.30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Ashley lost by 102 votes to 72 and on 14 June by 160 to 159.²⁷ The defeat meant that men might still work the full 15 hours, aided by children after the women and young persons left the mills; and the amendment was opposed because it involved protecting men. Ashley had been tricked into supporting a Bill contrary to the long-established aim of defending men — an aim openly announced by Banks in March. And Edwards and Fielden's supporters bitterly blamed Ashley for the blow.²⁸ The Government had, as Disraeli observed,

taken advantage of a flaw in an Act of Parliament . . . to deprive the people of an agitation of 30 years, of an Act of Parliament which they had struggled for . . . not on the merits of the case, but by acts which an attorney would despise.

The Yorkshire committee planned a county campaign on 12 June, and Rawson held a large meeting in the Bradford Temperance Hall, supported by the vicar, Dr. John Burnett, eight other clergymen, a Moravian minister, Pollard, Charles Hardy, Balme and Charles Walker, whose brother was aiding Manners in London. If they failed now, Burnett declared, they would work for 8 hours legislation. Throughout the North meetings expressed 'intense grief and indignation' at the omission of children.²⁹ Manners told Balme, Fielden, Walker and Rand that 'no exertion ought to be spared to ensure a good

division on the ten hours amendment', and the London delegates, now under Joseph Hurst, circularised all Members. On 14 June, soon after Ashley's second defeat, Manners proposed his amendment to end the working day at 5.30 p.m., appealing to Members to vote 'in accordance with English honesty and English honour'. But Grey insisted on the extra time, and the motion was lost by 181 votes to 142. 'Free Trade in everything, especially in flesh and blood, is henceforth to be the order of the day', lamented Stephens : ³⁰

The meanness of the Manchester school has triumphed over the honour of the English gentlemen. So much for the *lower* House, including Lord Ashley, who did not even give the poor children a God help them, much less a vote. Now for the *upper* House. Let no time be lost in seeking to reverse in the Chamber of Peers the cruel decision come to *in another place*.

Grey's compromise, declared Manners, was 'a compromise of nothing but the rights of the people and of the honour of Parliament'.

Burnett and the Yorkshire committee urged supporters to canvass the Lords, and Balme circulated petitions for presentation by Feversham. But Feversham warned Balme that ³¹

Several peers who supported the Bill of 1847 are, I hear, now opposed to the proposition of 58 hours per week, and prefer supporting the Government measure.

Oxford remained sympathetic and asked Balme for 'an exact account', while Richmond promised to propose Manners' amendment and Harrowby (the former Sandon) to move Ashley's motion.³² On 29 June Balme and Rawson wrote to the Peers in their support. Lancashire reformers raised similar support for Stanley. Stephens urged them never to forgive Ashley's 'base desertion', whether due to 'a naturally weak, mean and shifty' character or to 'more criminal instincts and purposes'; they must ask the Lords for 'either the real Ten Hours Act, or no act at all'. He quoted the comment of *The Constitutional and Church Sentinel* that 'henceforth [Ashley's] philanthropy would savour of hypocrisy, his benevolence of cant'.³³

The final campaign was organised thoroughly, and delegates canvassed the Peers in July. Balme issued virtually a last

appeal from the old headquarters in Northumberland Court on 10 July, explaining Richmond and Harrowby's work :

Both these amendments are so ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY in order to preserve and maintain the honour of Parliament and duly to protect little children that we are emboldened to solicit the favour of your Lordship's support and PERSONAL ATTENDANCE (proxies not being available in Committee). . . .

Old supporters remained loyal, and the Bishop of Ripon postponed his holiday to attend the Lords on 15 July, while Oastler watched from the gallery. Feversham, Stanley, Oxford and Ripon supported the amendments, against Lansdowne and the Bishop of Manchester. Oastler particularly praised Ripon's speech ; but *The Times* thought that he resembled 'a certain amiable incendiary'. Harrowby lost by 52 votes to 39 and was again defeated on 19 July, although Brougham himself thought the Bill unfair. Grey's measure received the Royal Assent on 5 August.³⁴

II

'So far as law and rule and government extend, Manchester is England ; for its Chamber of Commerce dictates to the Imperial Senate', wrote Stephens, on hearing the news. But

The most humiliating and offensive feature in the recent repeal of the Ten Hours Act was the rank hypocrisy of the parties conspiring to effect it. Nothing had been done openly and honestly.

Oastler could only vaguely hope for the Queen's help and advise operatives to remember their friends. On 28 July the new Lancashire committee called a Manchester conference of delegates from Ashton, Burnley, Clitheroe, Heywood, Newton Moor, Littleborough, Warrington, Manchester, Todmorden, Stalybridge, Oldham, Hebden Bridge, Waterhead Mill and Dukinfield, under Knight. It was decided to continue the struggle and to call a full conference to appoint a new Central Committee.³⁵ On the same day, Yorkshire delegates meeting at Halifax denounced Grant and Ashley, and expressed their ³⁶

utmost contempt and indignation to his Lordship, for the scandalous, abominable and disgraceful manner he had manifested in having betrayed the factory cause.

A 'Fieldenite' conference met in the Manchester People's Institute on 17 and 18 August, when Bolton, Blackburn, Stockport, Preston, Chorlton, Hulme, Bury, Rochdale, Wigan, Radcliffe Bridge, Colne, Salford, Hyde, Chorley, Bacup, Enfield, Padiham, Gorton, Droylsden, Hazelgrove, Worsley and Harwood were represented, in addition to the committees attending the Central meeting; 36 branches were now affiliated. Sam Fielden could only advise the delegates to collect information. A week later Mawdsley's group met supporters from Manchester, Dukinfield, Blackburn and Darwen in the 'Cotton Tree', under Hargreaves. They resolved that the old Central Committee should remain in office until its debts were cleared, and decided to act as a 'committee of observation'.³⁷ The rival organisations were bitterly divided over finance; Mawdsley's group had received £42 : 11 : 8 and spent £76 : 5 : 9 since June, and claimed that Knight and Avison's committee owed about £60 towards the cost of the Exchequer case, which they refused.³⁸ Both groups promised to continue the Ten Hours fight.

The 1850 Act actually made some advances. Women and young persons were restricted to work between 6 and 6 (or 7 and 7 in winter), except when making up time; and a Saturday half-holiday was also established. In April Horner thought that free evenings and Saturday afternoons met the 'Ten Hours' case, and in October he reported that most operatives considered the concession fair.³⁹ Brotherton believed that Grey's Act 'would confer more benefit on the working classes' than any previous legislation. But Fielden's Act, for which reformers had so long struggled, was denied at the last; and 257 mills employed some 3700 young children after their mothers and older brothers and sisters had left work. Consequently, claimed Stephens, 'the name of Lord Ashley would for ever stink in the nostrils of honest men'.⁴⁰

On 3 September Stephens and Joshua Fielden restarted the agitation at Oldham, to protect men, raise the starting age and restrict the power; to them, Grey's Act was 'an act of fraud, as well as theft'. But the rival groups still argued. Grant published twelve patently untrue charges against Oastler and his friends, alleging that they had unnecessarily prolonged the controversy and had persuaded the Earl of Eglinton and other Peers to exclude the children, 'to keep up the spirit of discontent and

the question open, and the operatives in the hands of the Protectionists' — and to continue their 'profitable occupation in the science of agitation'. The impoverished Oastler considered the last accusation 'rich' from Grant, once an operative and now a 'well-to-do tradesman'; the rest of the 'splenetic and petulant epistle' was unfounded slander. Grant's case was also demolished by Richard Cobbett, who ⁴¹

was employed . . . to take care that the new Bill was sufficient for its purpose [and] in his efforts to this end, met with but one serious obstacle, namely, Lord Ashley's determination that it should *not* be so.

A year later, Ashley sadly commented that his 'labour of love' was forgotten: 'I won for them *almost* everything, but for the loss of that very little, they regard me as an enemy'. Years later, he recalled, still with apparent surprise, that 'Oastler, Walker and the Fielden family denounced me as a *traitor*, and never ceased afterwards to hurt and slander me'.⁴² Ashley never really understood the North.

III

The Factory Movement maintained a spasmodic and often embryonic existence after 1850. In that year Ferrand addressed rowdy Protectionist meetings from Haddington to Lincolnshire, for his 'Farmers' Wool and Flax League', which aimed at substituting woollen and linen goods for 'blood-stained cotton'. Headed by the Marquess of Downshire, the League was supported by the *Standard* and sarcastically followed by *The Times*. Oastler was sympathetic, but urged Ferrand to secure workers' support; and the declining *Northern Star* commended the 'sound idea'. But after very successful early rallies, the meetings grew progressively more boisterous. A Boston constable was seriously injured, and a Herefordshire meeting was broken by free-traders; and Ferrand's organisation collapsed.⁴³ However, Ferrand remained a popular Protectionist speaker and was only narrowly defeated at Aylesbury in April 1851.

Oastler also was still active. After Peel's death in July, he insisted that Free Trade was never 'the shibboleth of the veritable working man', but the creation of 'Manchester, sup-

ported by the gold and audacity of the millocracy'. He supported North-Eastern miners' campaigns for legislation on ventilation, and iron workers, tailors, Spitalfields weavers and shopworkers' appeals for shorter hours, and still urged particularist groups to unite: 'the working man who demanded foreign corn and resisted the introduction of foreign labour into his own craft was not an honest man!' ⁴⁴ In May 1851 he founded *The Home*, a weekly journal, to propagate his 'Christian and Constitutional principles' in the new age.

The factory reformers met periodically to make presentations to old leaders and supporters. In January 1851 a Manchester group presented a watch and purse to Grant, and in November Bolton operatives addressed Ashley. Some five years later Pitt received sixty sovereigns from Dukinfield reformers, at the hand of Hindley, who claimed that,⁴⁵

If they had not obtained what they set out for, they had obtained a 10½ hours bill, which answered every necessary purpose. . . .

In 1859 Lancashire reformers presented a bust of Ashley (who had succeeded as 7th Earl of Shaftesbury in 1851), to his wife. The Yorkshire committee gave Balme a testimonial in July 1863, when Burnett, Longley (now Archbishop of Canterbury), Walker, Bull, Grant and Hook contributed. Further subscriptions were raised for Grant in 1873 and Balme in 1883; and Oastler regularly received tokens of affection. The committees also came together for social events, the greatest being a Ten Hours exhibition and bazaar at Bolton in September 1852.⁴⁶

In *The Home* Oastler developed his comprehensive Protectionism. With his secretary, Samuel Kydd, he discussed the Poor Law, 'the encroachments of Popery', agriculture, industrial regulation, Free Trade and 'New Model' unionism.⁴⁷ He supported Delaforce in condemning the 'present unfair system of reckless competition called free trade' (which he blamed for most strikes) and championed the miners' 8 hours agitation, anti-Truck campaigns, Operative Conservatives and the struggling Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The journal's supporters included Sir Charles Burrell, Almack, Maxwell, Sinclair, Charles Attwood, Sir Brook Bridges, Lords Granby, Sondes, Mandeville, Berners, Bradford and Colchester

and such factory reformers as Manners, Tweeddale, Edwards, Ferrand, Bull, Rashleigh, the Fieldens, the Walkers, Auty and Feversham. But, as Oastler noted,⁴⁸

It cannot be expected that such a paper, possessing no meretricious attractions, should rapidly meet with a very large circulation. . . .

Oastler's 'solid truths' were, in fact, heavily weighted with Evangelical piety. But for four years *The Home* usefully linked such bodies as Stanhope, Richmond and G. F. Young's 'National Association for the Protection of Industry and Capital' with workers' groups, under Oastler's cry of 'Protection to All, or Protection to None'.

IV

The factory reformers remained divided. While Oastler ascribed all distress to Free Trade, Shaftesbury told Russell that ⁴⁹

the repeal of the Corn Laws has marvellously improved the condition of the labouring classes in this country.

And on 7 December 1851 Mawdsley's organisation, in conference at the 'Cotton Tree', 'accepted' Grey's Act.⁵⁰ This decision was supported by groups at Ashton and Bolton, but Oastler furiously condemned it: he wanted Fielden's Act, with restriction of power and personal punishment, and advised the committees to accept Sam Fielden's leadership. The Factory Operatives' Association agreed.⁵¹

On 28 February 1852 Lancashire reformers, meeting at Rochdale to discuss evasions of the Act, adopted Oastler's suggestions in full. Three weeks later Mallalieu presided over a Todmorden conference which re-established a formal organisation, the 'Fielden Association'.⁵² Branches were formed at Oldham, Bacup, Chorlton, Heywood, Todmorden, Padiham, Royton, Littleborough, Manchester and Ashton, and other societies joined in the spring. Oastler welcomed the revival of a militant, uncompromising movement and urged the branches to join in election canvassing: 'should Manchester conquer', asserted Kydd, 'the Factories Regulation Act was in peril'. Oastler defended Derby's Government, condemned Cobden and Graham and assailed Bright's class attacks:

Mr. Bright, a cotton lord, should be the last man to invoke a civil war. Cotton mills are not a necessity — fields are. England was a great nation when Manchester was a little hamlet.

He thanked Russell for his past support, but attacked the 'heartless and relentless' Wood.⁵³ And from Malaga Ferrand sent open letters to the Peelite Duke of Newcastle, on 'Cotton versus Corn':

The Peelites have been [the operatives'] hardest taskmasters, their bitterest foes. . . . When the Ten Hours Bill, the factory operatives' Magna Carta of protection, was triumphantly carried through Parliament by the Protectionists, your vote, with the other Peelites, was ever recorded on the side of their oppressors. . . .

He lengthily attacked O'Connell, the League, the Poor Law, Free Trade and the masters in his old style.⁵⁴

The Fielden Association issued a long *Address* on 21 March, quoting Inspectors Horner, Howell, Saunders and John Kincaid (who succeeded Stuart in December 1849) on breaches of the Act. Mallalieu, Mills and Robert Holmes of Manchester built up a movement throughout Lancashire, and Oastler attempted to rouse Yorkshire support; Manners raised £105 to help him. But Oastler was not invariably successful. When he urged Halifax reformers to support Edwards — whose defeat 'would be a death-blow to his hopes' — against Wood, Robert Wilkinson replied that the operatives were 'quite at ease' and opposed Oastler and Edwards for resisting suffrage extensions. Oastler publicly supported Edwards, but the local committee, under Uriah Hinchcliffe, rejected his advice and other committees' appeals for help, declaring,⁵⁵

we have passed a resolution not to take part in such agitation until there is an union of the two parties in Lancashire, believing that the same elements are at work which so much injured the last agitation, viz. . . . Protection v. Free Trade.

Oastler was told that the committee supported Wood, and he condemned them as 'Whig tools'. The Fieldens supported Edwards on the hustings, but he was defeated, to Oastler's sorrow: 'they had all built on that man'. But John Cobbett won Oldham, and Strickland held Preston, with the reformers' help. The Bradford committee refused to aid any 'Free Trade' candidate.⁵⁶

After the elections, a full-scale agitation developed. The first move was against the Halifax deserters: on 14 July the veteran Benjamin Rushton formed a new Ten Hours Committee. And on 8 August 76 delegates from 34 committees (including Coventry) met in the Queen's Hotel at Todmorden, under Mallalieu; ten other groups sent supporting letters. They resolved to press for the full Act, restriction of power and heavier penalties. A representative committee was formed, under a managing committee consisting of Mills, William Pinder, James Scholefield and Thomas Murray, with Holmes as secretary and John Haigh as treasurer. Oastler, the Fieldens, Stephens, Edwards, Fletcher and John Cobbett were appointed as advisers. Oastler solicited Protectionist support, and a Halifax reformer urged 'the new Short-Time Union' to adopt *The Home*, 'the publication of their best friend'.⁵⁷

On 13 August a new Ashton committee was established, under James Fitton; and, perhaps because the worst offences occurred nearby, this group favoured a strike policy, but was eventually dissuaded. In the autumn Oastler visited the North and received Bradford and Huddersfield addresses. He called for another appeal to Parliament, despite the danger of 11 hours legislation: 'if no man in England would assist, he would strive to do it single-handed'. He repeated this advice to the Halifax men by letter and at a Padiham meeting in December.⁵⁸ From Birmingham, Bull gave his entire support, declaring that he personally preferred 8 hours. His influence undoubtedly helped the formation of committees at Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth during September; Joshua Fielden addressed a Coventry rally in October.⁵⁹ The new movement's strength was tested on 9 September, when Mawdsley's committee organised a meeting in the Manchester Temperance Institute. Mawdsley supported Grey, but an operative's amendment for the full Act was overwhelmingly carried.⁶⁰

The campaign was maintained through the winter. Droylsden met on 3 November, and the Padiham committee held a great tea-party on 4 December, to hear Ferrand, Joshua Fielden, the Unitarian Rev. Henry Dean, the Rev. Charles Whittaker and the vicar, Adamson. 'Labour has not been properly protected', declared Ferrand,⁶¹

and I say, until machinery is taught that it has its duties as well as its rights, the working man must go to the wall.

Two days later the same message was announced by the 'Labour League for the Protection and Regulation of the Interests of Native Producers', formed by such London leaders as Robert Essery, George Read and Delaforce to advocate 'Boards of Trade', regulation of hours, abolition of Truck and repeal of the Poor Law — which 'strengthened [Oastler's] hope'.⁶² Burroughs' Spitalfields men still supported a similar policy. But within a week the last Protectionist Government fell, and soon afterwards the Protectionist National Association was dissolved. Aberdeen's Ministry took office.

Early in 1853 Oastler continued to publicise both London and Northern agitations. With Essery and Delaforce, he awarded Ferrand's prize for the best essay on the effects of Free Trade to Kydd.⁶³ Committees were revived throughout Lancashire and, to a lesser extent, Yorkshire, to raise petitions for Manners and Richmond; and *The Borough of Oldham Vindicator and Lancashire Ten Hours Advocate* made its appearance. On 6 January Stephens told a Todmorden rally that

no woman whose good husband had ever led her out of the church porch from God's altar ought to go inside a factory door.

A week later he joined Joshua Fielden in the Stockport Lyceum. Sam Fielden spoke in Macclesfield Town Hall on 3 February, with the Rev. Samuel Stocks; and old Fletcher chaired a Bury meeting next day. Droylsden reformers called for 'a genuine Ten Hours Bill' on 3 March, and Stephens and Joshua Fielden spoke in Over Darwen fifteen days later, when local masters raised the first opposition but Rainsford Jackson, a Blackburn master and committee president, gave support. On 6 April Edwards spoke at Halifax.⁶⁴ But nine days later the Yorkshire committee at Bradford adopted Pollard and Walker's motion to co-operate in gaining 'a strict enforcement of the law' but not to help 'in any further agitation as to a change in the law'. Oastler read of the decision with 'inexpressible grief' in *The Times*' only note on the agitation — a proof that their 'most subtle, sagacious and influential opponent' regarded it as a 'most important blow'. He asked George Demain's Bradford committee to work for the full Act; and on 26 April Joshua

Fielden, Holmes and Stephens persuaded 1700 Bradford operatives to oppose the Yorkshire committee. The leaders were convinced that fears of 11 hours legislation were groundless, and still threatened to agitate for 8 hours.⁶⁵

Dewsbury reformers raised a new problem. Men had gained protection only through the restriction of children; but a new piecing machine would allow shoddy masters to dispense with children and increase men's hours to 15 or 16 — 'more than they can bear'. This put the question on 'an entirely new basis', claimed Oastler; it was more vital than ever to disprove the 'free agency' argument. Stephens, Joshua Fielden, Holmes, Mills and Tweedale spoke at Dewsbury on 10 May, under the loyal vicar, Allbutt.⁶⁶ Fielden went on to Huddersfield, where he frankly defended the power restriction:

We are told by supporters of long hours that the effect would be to restrict all labour in factories; that is what all the supporters of the present system acknowledge, and Parliament decided that it should be passed, and we are now only asking for what they have already granted us.

The meeting supported him. In all, 46 towns and nearly 700 mills sent petitions.⁶⁷

Delegates worked with Oastler in London and the usual pamphlets were issued. But opposition also grew. *The Times* condemned the Bill as 'rank socialism' — which, commented Kydd, was 'a stale trick'. When the Royton committee approached Arthur Wilkinson, M.P. for Lambeth, he strongly attacked the whole principle of Parliamentary interference. The Leeds Chamber of Commerce condemned the proposal, and on 11 July some 360 of Manchester's 'principal employers' formed a new Spinners' and Manufacturers' Association, to oppose the reformers.⁶⁸ All the usual ingredients were present in this strangely neglected agitation.

On 5 July John Cobbett moved for leave to introduce the Association's Bill, providing a 10 hours' day for children, young persons and women between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., and restricting the motive power. 'Is there no consideration for adult men?' he asked the House:

You have already put them in connection with, and chained them to the mule and the loom and the engine. . . . Allow the relay

system and who will tell where Mammon will stop in its attempt to destroy men's lives? For my part, I regard it as little less than murder. . . . Talk of freedom! The man in the factory is *not* free.

Granby, Sir Henry Halford, Manners, Sibthorp, Newdegate, Fox, Lord Goderich, Miall, Henry Drummond and others presented petitions. Montague Feilden, a large employer and Conservative Member for Blackburn, seconded, in his maiden speech, supported by Manners, Butt and Newdegate, against Grey, Patten, Labouchere and Russell. Palmerston, the Home Secretary, opposed further reductions of labour, but shocked Liberals by promising a Bill on the children's working day, as the staggered hours 'must entail such evils that no one could be surprised at [their] extreme mortality'. He acknowledged that 'to limit the children would be to limit the adults', but thought the measure essential.⁶⁹ Cobbett withdrew, and Palmerston's Bill was introduced on 18 July. This 'Employment of Children in Factories Bill' received the Royal Assent on 20 August.⁷⁰ It limited children's labour to the hours fixed for women and young persons; and so all protected workers — and men depending on their labour — had a fixed normal day.

V

The Factory Movement did not cease its work, although further rifts had appeared. 'How happens it that your Vicar is sailing in *Ashley's* coalboats?' Oastler asked Auty. 'I cannot understand how our *former* friends *Walker* and *Pollard* should have struck their colours!' Such losses saddened him:

he wondered upon what principle of reasoning his good friend Mr. W. Walker could be a Protectionist and be opposed to a restriction of the moving power!

But he appreciated Auty's loyalty: ⁷¹

It was refreshing to know that there was, here and there, an old, true friend left. . . . He hoped [Auty] had better success with his truly Loyal and Christian periodical than he had with his. . . .

Since 1851 Auty had published his virulent monthly *Orange and Blue Banner*.

Another friend, Ferrand, founded his 'Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire Labour League for the Protection and Regulation of the Interests of Native Producers' at Manchester on 4 August. His vice-chairmen were John Horsfall of Royton, Luke Swallow of Ashton, George Robinson of Clitheroe and J. Myers, John McDouall, Richard Yorke, William Grocott and James Ruse of Manchester; James English and John Hull were the secretaries and Councillor James Heaton of Clitheroe was treasurer. Robert Alexander and the Reverends Charles Whitaker and G. H. Moore were trustees. Oastler and Kydd welcomed the venture, which 'appeared to [Auty] just what was wanted . . . in opposition to Cobden and Co's flimsy, hollow and delusive free-trade League'. But, Auty knowingly wrote to Oastler,⁷²

Will the working classes believe in it? The old cuckoo-cry of 'Tory trick', or some other, will, no doubt, be raised by the enemies of the 'workies', and I fear will, as usual, succeed.

The new League's committee met in Manchester on 6 September, to plan a campaign, with Ferrand, Kydd, Moore and Le Gendre Starkie, a young Lancashire squire recently elected at a Clitheroe by-election, as speakers. The first rally was held at Clitheroe on 3 October, when Kydd addressed some 600 workers on 'Strikes — their causes and remedies'. Next day he spoke at Padiham with Ferrand and Starkie, and on 5 October at Burnley. Meetings followed at Bury, Todmorden, Colne, Haslingden, Bacup, Blackburn, Bingley, Bradford, Halifax, Oldham and Stockport, and the League adopted *The Home* as its organ.⁷³ But Auty's prophecy came true. The socialistic Ernest Jones, who was struggling with Harney for control of the Chartist remnants, hoped that 'the people would not be led away by a Tory factory lords' Protection dodge': the League was a Tory 'trick' on 'an impracticable question'. Jones considered that Protection would worsen conditions: ⁷⁴

the fault lies not in Trade's being *free*, but in Labour's being *enslaved*. . . . Free Trade, Free Land, Free Labour, founded on and guarded by the Free Vote, these are the securities for our future, and the redeemers of our present.

Many Lancashire workers were also involved in disputes following the famous Preston strike and lockout, over the

restoration of the 10 per cent wage cuts of 1847. Led by the factory reformer Mortimer Grimshaw, the Preston operatives held out for 38 weeks, until forced back to work in May 1854. Oastler supported them, and the Protectionist Sir John Tyrell sent £500; altogether, £105,000 were raised.⁷⁵ Keighley workers also engaged in bitter strikes. And varied bodies competed for workers' allegiance. Briggs' National Labour Alliance called for 'the division of wealth, as distinguished from . . . the monopoly of riches'; Chartist groups issued periodic appeals; 'New Model' and old-established unions were occupied in industrial disputes. Burroughs of Spitalfields again urged the different organisations to unite, when the 'Labour Question' was

agitating the whole country, and with such men as the Cobbetts, the Bulls, the Fieldens, the Ferrands, the Oastlers to aid them, both in and out of Parliament.

But Jones could 'see only three great movements having anything like extended influence, power and cohesion', in October: 'the Charter, the Trades Unions and Short Time. These three organisations [were] noble, salutary and needful'.⁷⁶

VI

The reformers maintained some organisation. On 17 September Feilden, Cobbett and Stephens spoke at a Bolton tea-party to several clergymen and some 1400 bleachers, dyers and finishers, who now sought their own 10 hours' day.⁷⁷ 'Short Time' agitation developed in Birmingham. And 38 delegates, under Mallalieu, attended the Fielden Association's first annual meeting at Todmorden, on 1 October. Bradford, Blackburn, Dewsbury, Bacup, Bingley, Darwen, Droylsden, Heywood, Halifax, Huddersfield, Hebden Bridge, Burnley, Leeds, Manchester, Keighley, Hyde, Macclesfield, Littleborough, Royton, Crompton, Oldham and Todmorden were represented, and Clitheroe, Enfield, Coventry, Bury, Rochdale and Stockport sent messages. John Fielden was appointed treasurer, on Haigh's death. And the Association resolved to continue the fight for the full Act.⁷⁸

However, it was obviously useless to start another campaign

at once. The committees' activities were curtailed, and *The Home* declined as its pages were increasingly devoted to religion. Oastler supported an anti-Truck Bill debated in the Commons on 16 February 1854, the activities of Briggs' Alliance and agitations got up by William Wood of Manchester against the employment of climbing boys.⁷⁹ But there was little Ten Hours activity to report, although the bleachers' agitation had spread, especially in Scotland. Shaftesbury proposed a Bill, which passed the Lords, but which Butt was compelled to withdraw in the Commons, while Tremenheere investigated conditions in the bleaching industries. No Lancashire meetings were held during the Preston dispute, and when Cobbett tried to reintroduce his Bill on 4 July, he was 'counted out'.⁸⁰

Arguments increasingly turned on the subject of industrial accidents. In January 1854 the Inspectors issued a circular on the need to fence all shafts, but in March a deputation of masters persuaded Palmerston that it was unnecessary to fence shafts over 7 feet from the floor, and the circular was modified.⁸¹ Many masters continued to ignore safety precautions and the toll of mangled operatives continued, especially among maintenance workers. The Ten Hours committees reported cases, but they rarely met together. When Oastler visited the North in the winter, he found few active groups and many closed mills. At Carlisle Robert Perring and local clergy, under the Dean, A. C. Tait, were seriously concerned at the ever-worsening state of the Cumbrian handweavers.⁸²

In 1855 the last agitation of the old Factory Movement was launched. The Inspectors' third circular on fencing, somewhat strengthening precautions, aroused some masters' hostility to the increasing interference and the expense of permanently casing the machine shafts. On 6 March representatives of over 700 concerns planned a new society, and seventeen days later a meeting under R. H. Greg, supported by the Ashtons and Ashworths, resolved to protest to the Home Secretary. The organisation rapidly grew, and its secretary, Henry Whitworth, told Halifax masters that 'they should try to repeal or totally remodel the Factory Act'. On 17 April the title was changed from the 'Factory Law Amendment Association' to the 'National Association of Factory Occupiers', with Greg as chairman.⁸³ Oastler was soon worried by the

new threat, and Dickens condemned 'the National Association for the Protection of the Right to Mangle Operatives', which was 'not squeamish about a few spots of spilt brain, or a leg or an arm more or less upon a poor man's body'.⁸⁴

Meanwhile, Cobbett prepared to reintroduce his Bill. The Fielden Association produced new literature, demonstrating the inaccuracy of opponents' past forecasts and claiming the support of many masters for the restriction of power; and Inspector Robert Baker appealed for the extension of industrial legislation.⁸⁵ On 15 March Cobbett sought leave to introduce his Bill, and was backed by Fox, Newdegate, Crossley and Edward Ball, against Grey, Wilkinson, Bright and Palmerston. In the division he was supported by Lord Robert Cecil, Arthur and Octavius Duncombe, Milnes Gaskell, Sir William Jolliffe, Miles, Muntz, Strickland and Northcote, and opposed by M. T. Baines, Michael Bass, Bonham Carter, Cardwell, Milner Gibson, Graham, Cornwall Lewis, Milnes, Villiers, Wood and James Stuart-Wortley. Cobbett was defeated by 109 votes to 101,⁸⁶ and the last attempt to restore Fielden's Act failed.

But the masters' Association presented a danger to the whole principle of factory legislation, and in July claimed to include the employers of 250,000 workers. It secured the support of the redoubtable Harriet Martineau, and published her paper (already rejected by the *Westminster Review*) on *The Factory Controversy: A Warning against Meddling Legislation*. To that angry Radical lady, the Factory Acts demonstrated the 'vice . . . injustice and impracticableness' of interference. She condemned the Inspectors and Palmerston, and denounced the 'unscrupulous statements and objectionable misrepresentations' of the 'humanity monger' Dickens, with his 'philoperative cant . . . conceit, insolence and wilful one-mindedness'. Parliament should

leave to the workers in factories, as to other workers, the care of their own lives and limbs, with the ordinary remedy against the misdeeds of their employers. . . .

The Association continued to oppose the 'unjust, not to say insulting' Acts, the Inspectors and the 'partial and unjust law', and fought compensation claims in the courts. But it modified the intentions declared by some members; it aimed

to watch over Factory Legislation with a view to prevent any increase of the present unfair and injudicious enactments; to obtain an amendment of the present Factory Laws and their administration; to protect [its] members . . . from improper prosecutions and unfair proceedings. . . .

But it was 'precluded' from attempting to alter working hours or abolish Inspection.⁸⁷

The Home ceased publication on 30 June, but Oastler answered the Association in an open letter to Sam Fielden and William Walker, who published it. Oastler sought to reveal both the 'declared and ill-concealed objects of that powerful, vituperative and unscrupulous body'. The Association allegedly hoped only to remove restraints not placed on other trades; but these included provisions on education, safety, health and Inspection — 'amounting, in fact, to a *Repeal of the Factory Laws!*' Furthermore, recent prosecutions proved that the masters were still evading the Acts, wrote Oastler :

. . . I suggest that the real object of the Associated Factory Occupiers is, if not entirely to repeal, at least to obtain such a modification of the Factory Laws as will enable [them] to violate all their material parts with impunity. . . . They ever have been, and are now, the direct enemies of all Factory Legislation. . . .

In support of these contentions, Oastler quoted speeches by Thomas Bazley, John Whitwell, J. A. Turner and William Kirk, M.P. for Newry. It was 'absolutely necessary' for reformers to support the Inspectors and oppose the Association.⁸⁸

After being defeated in the case of *Doel v. Sheppard* in Queen's Bench, in January 1856, the Association prepared a Bill to change the law on safety provisions. 'The ten hours men', declared the *Halifax Guardian*,

must prepare for another campaign. . . . The fencing question may be as fatal to the Factory Acts as the relay system was to the ten hours limit.

Patten promoted the measure in April, and defeated Cobbett's opposition. The Act treated gearing as machinery, providing that only gearing with which 'protected persons' came into contact should be securely fenced. The masters thus saved small sums on fencing; and, as the Inspectors pointed out, operatives who temporarily and unknowingly worked near

dangerous gearing were left unprotected.⁸⁹ But the Association did not gain any major change in the Acts. Legislation, in fact, was gradually extended; and many old opponents ultimately admitted their past errors. In 1860 Graham himself 'endeavoured to make some amends' by supporting the Bleaching and Dyeing Works Bill.⁹⁰ Roebuck likewise acknowledged his conversion, and in 1864 Gladstone uttered some praise of the Acts, although, Shaftesbury noted, 'he did not retract with the honesty of Roebuck and Graham'.⁹¹

By 1861 Bull claimed that

There is now scarcely a manufacturer to be found who does not thank God for the factory regulation laws, which were forced from an unwilling government by Oastler and his friends. . . .

He quoted Senior's appeal to 'the wise and courageous' reformers to extend the half-time system to all children under 13.⁹² In 1867, during the debate on Spencer Walpole's Factory Acts Extension Bill, Professor Fawcett bewailed the conversion of Shaftesbury's old opponents; and Edward Akroyd⁹³

was forced to admit the benefits which the country gentlemen had conferred upon the manufacturing interest by resolutely pressing these Acts upon them.

Laissez-faire attitudes died hard, but factory legislation was the mortal blow.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE AFTERMATH

AFTER its long agitation, the Factory Movement did not achieve all of its aims. But the 60 hours' week, worked in set periods, greatly benefited thousands of workers. Some modern historians, engaged in disproving exaggerated accounts of the social effects of the Industrial Revolution, have perhaps unduly minimised the brutal conditions of early factory life, and thus 'reduced' the apparent importance of the Factory Acts. But the discovery that the Movement's case was sometimes buttressed by over-painted or even untrue allegations, and that some reformers' motives were more subtly complicated than their purely humanitarian professions indicated, should not be allowed to conceal the fact that before the reforms work was often fantastically long and discipline harsh.

The Movement has suffered from its supporters, as well as from its critics. Kydd published two balanced but mediocre volumes in 1857, based on Oastler's own papers, but halting at 1847. Grant produced an egoistic account in 1866; and, although Ashley himself noted several omissions, most of his biographers subsequently accepted Grant's distorted narrative. W. R. Croft wrote a third account in 1888, generally following Kydd but adding several errors. More recently, modern political doctrines have influenced much writing touching on the Movement; and although excellent surveys of aspects of the agitation have appeared, the Movement itself has received little close attention.

Opinions on the immediate results of legislation varied considerably. Bull and the Anglican philanthropists had always expected religious and educational benefits from shorter hours, and priests supporting the later agitation largely confirmed such hopes. In 1849 delegates reported that the Manchester coarse spinners had attended schools and cultivated allotments, the United Overlookers joined adult classes and the Mechanics'

Institutes, and Astley Bridge operatives opened a school. Preston, Warrington, Todmorden, Hyde, Stockport and Bradford workers held night classes, Burnley and Warrington men supported religious bodies, and at Bradford, Todmorden, Rochdale and Hyde the operatives took up gardening. The vicar of Preston confirmed the great increase in night schools, and Joshua Fielden told Stockport workers that there were nine 'mutual improvement' classes in Todmorden, while the taverns were empty.¹ In 1851 Shaftesbury told Russell that the Manchester operatives²

are *morally* and physically improved. The children look lively and *young*; a few years ago they looked weary and *old*. '*Hae tibi erunt artes*'.

Although temporary wage reductions followed the Act, most Lancashire workers interviewed by Horner's staff supported the measure.³ But another observer painted a very different picture of one town:⁴

The working classes of Blackburn and its neighbourhood have few amusements. . . . They run to foolish singing rooms . . . where depravity prevails and morality is at a low ebb; after which both parents and children retire to the beer-shop, and thus spend their hard-earned weekly wages. Their very bodies are poisoned with smoke and drink, ribaldry and obscenity.

Ten years later, in 1861, William Newmarch gave a longer-term view of more intangible results, telling a section of the British Association that the Acts⁵

had consolidated [Lancashire] society . . . swept away a great mass of festering and growing discontent [and] placed the prosperity of the district on a broad, solid and safe basis. . . .

The Movement also trained many working men for public work in industrial, co-operative or political organisations. 'The operatives themselves did their duty', recalled Shaftesbury. 'Their delegates . . . were always active and trustworthy men.'⁶

But the agitation had wider effects. It led Oastler into a variety of Short-Time campaigns for bakers, mechanics, dyers and others; and it set off the shop-workers' 'Early Closing' movement, which Oastler supported at Huddersfield in 1852 and which was aided in Scotland by the Evangelical Conservative John Hope and such Free Church leaders as Dr.

James Begg and Thomas Guthrie.⁷ Ashley was founder-president of the Early Closing Movement of 1842 and of the Y.M.C.A. in 1844. And restrictive legislation spread — in 1860 to bleaching and dyeing works, in 1861 to lace factories, in 1864 to various non-textile trades and in 1867 to a large range of industries.⁸ The Factory Movement thus influenced political thinking, and affected health and educational as well as industrial legislation.

I

After the factory agitation, the reformers generally followed quieter paths. Shaftesbury achieved fame. 'The social reforms of the last century', the Duke of Argyll told the Lords, in 1885, '. . . have been due to the influence, character and perseverance of one man — Lord Shaftesbury.' And Shaftesbury never forgot that his reforming career began in the Factory Movement. 'Could his heart be seen by them and by others', he told Manchester operatives, in October 1866, 'upon it they would find engraved the name of Lancashire.'⁹ He constantly recalled that his wife 'first counselled him to undertake the duty and ever was his main *Earthly* support in the discharge of it'.¹⁰

Oastler lived quietly at Guildford and Conway. He published his last pamphlet in 1860, a long appeal for the restoration of Convocation, still tracing 'all political and social evils to the laxity of discipline in the Established Church', and still condemning 'that great idol Free Trade, moulded in Manchester and electroplated in Birmingham'. Oastler 'sought for Convocation' to end 'infidel legislation'. Welcoming Crook's Bleaching and Dyeing Works Bill, he hoped that the Church would lead the fight against 'the cruel monster, Unrestricted Competition'. And he recalled the motives which had prompted his career:¹¹

How many millions of the human race have been sacrificed at the altar of Unrestricted Competition is known alone to God. I have known of some such victims. I know the condition of life awarded to the industrious hand-loom weavers by this 'one infallible rule of political economy'. It is a living death, when human beings will live on carrion. . . .

Oastler died of a heart attack on 22 August 1861, at Harrogate, during a rare Northern visit. Eight days later Ferrand, Walker, Pollard, Sam Fielden, Tweedale, Kydd, Grant and Leech carried the body of the 'Factory King' to its funeral at Kirkstall, past thousands of mourners under such old leaders as Balme, Rawson, Mawdsley, William Fair, Hutton, John O'Rourke, J. U. Walker, Firth, Hobson, Bull, Frost, Weatherhead, the Fieldens, Auty and James Cobbett. The Press paid long tributes, Bull delivered three sermons on 'one of the most successful and practical Religious Reformers of his day', and Auty penned a fulsome panegyric on 'the greatest man of his day'.¹²

Bull suggested the erection of statues of Oastler and Fielden at Leeds and Manchester; and William Walker formed a committee, with Ferrand, Edwards and Sam Fielden as vice-chairmen, Leech and Walker's son as secretaries and Edward Akroyd and Thomas Fielden as treasurers. Subscriptions came from the Archbishop of York, Shaftesbury, Feversham, Baines, Cayley, J. P. Cobbett, W. E. Forster, Miall, Sir Francis Crossley, Lord Frederick Cavendish, John Rand and the old committees. The Manchester fine spinners sent £100 and the A.S.E., though unable to subscribe, aided the appeal; Oastler was 'a great friend to the working classes, and laboured hard . . . on their behalf', explained William Allan. Newdegate, with very different politics, 'sincerely valued Mr. Oastler', whom he had regularly supported.¹³ The fund raised £1500, and the committee commissioned a bronze statue of Oastler with two children from J. Birnie Philip. Forster saw the statue in 1867 and hoped that Bradford (now chosen as the site) would value it as 'a work of art and a memorial of a good man and a great cause' — a hope sadly unfulfilled.¹⁴ Balme arranged the inauguration on 15 May 1869, when part of the 1850 rift was healed by Ferrand and Shaftesbury, before a vast crowd. Shaftesbury praised Oastler's 'force of talent, vigour of mind and earnestness of heart'; Ferrand declared that he 'did more for the welfare of the working population of this part of England than any other man, living or dead'; and even Miall told a doubting crowd that he now supported factory reform.¹⁵ Forty years later, a Leeds committee, appropriately led by Sadler's great nephew, Sir Michael Sadler, erected a tablet at Oastler's

birthplace; and when the building was demolished in the 1930's, a block of the great Quarry Hill flats was named 'Oastler House'. 'Leeds would always be linked with [Oastler's] name', declared Stanley Baldwin, in 1925. Huddersfield monuments were erected at Christ Church and the 'Richard Oastler Memorial' playing ground; and in 1913 a week of 'Oastler' celebrations was organised.¹⁶ Oastler was never quite forgotten.

Ferrand remained active for many years. After contesting Devonport in April 1859 and twice in August, he was elected in February 1863, to Manners' delight.¹⁷ In Parliament he resumed his old work, inaugurating a heated debate on Lancashire conditions. In 1864 he promoted a Bill on boiler accidents and workmen's compensation, and spoke on various industrial and naval matters and on reservoirs. His attacks on nepotism in 1865 led to Lord Chancellor Westbury's resignation. Ferrand was re-elected in July 1865, but was unseated in the following May. He failed at Coventry in July 1867 and Devonport in November 1868. During the 'sixties he was a leader of the Working Men's Conservative Associations, and he hoped to contest Stalybridge in 1871; but increasing deafness compelled him gradually to retire. Thereafter, magisterial duties, sport and agriculture occupied his time, although he published occasional vigorous letters. He died, almost forgotten, on 31 March 1889, four days after his old enemy, Bright.¹⁸

Stephens survived to an old age of gout, Turkish baths and heavy smoking. In 1852 he moved from Ashton to Stalybridge, where he preached until leaving the ministry in 1875. He opposed Teetotal and Sabbatarian movements, was chaplain to Alexander Macdonald's famous miners' conference at Leeds in 1863 and joined the local school-board in the 'seventies. He was active during the cotton famine, denouncing the authorities' inactivity and leading appeals for relief, thus earning the admiration of Dr. J. H. Bridges, later the chief medical officer of the Local Government Board. Stephens opposed the masters' anti-Union 'Document', and from 1867 supported the Eight Hours agitation. The intrepid old agitator died on 18 February 1879, and was buried at Dukinfield. Holyoake helped to raise funds for a memorial in the Stamford park.¹⁹

Manners continued his political career, serving as Derby's First Commissioner of Works in 1852, 1858 and 1866 and

Disraeli's Postmaster-General in 1874. He succeeded his brother (the former Granby) as 7th Duke of Rutland in 1888, and became Salisbury's Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1886. Manners supported the short-time agitations of the 'seventies, and lived until 1906.²⁰ Feversham was a famous breeder of shorthorns on his 40,000 acres around Duncombe Park, and died in 1867; Kydd's history was dedicated to him. Bull maintained his work in Birmingham, as perpetual curate of S. Matthew's from 1840 and vicar of S. Thomas' from 1847. At last, worn by toil, he moved to Almeley in Herefordshire, but died soon afterwards, in August 1864.²¹

Joshua Fielden married John Brocklehurst's niece, and became Conservative M.P. for the West Riding in 1868 with Christopher Beckett Denison. In April 1871 Fielden, Ferrand and Manners unveiled a statue of John Fielden in Todmorden, where Shaftesbury's *volte-face* was never forgiven. 'I tried to persuade Joshua Fielden to let me say something handsome of Shaftesbury', Manners told Ferrand, 'but found, if I did, he would break out in abuse . . .'. Fielden died in 1887, having established a line of country gentlemen. His sister married John Morgan Cobbett, who sat as an Independent Member for Oldham in 1852-1865 and as a Conservative from 1872 until his death in 1877. Sam Fielden managed the family concern until he died in 1889, aged 73. His uncle James, who ran the mills during John's life, died at his gaunt home, Dobroyd Castle, in 1852, while another uncle, the millionaire merchant Thomas, lived until 1869.²²

Old supporters gradually died off after the mid-century. The self-made Hardy died in 1855 as a prosperous landowner. His eldest son, Sir John, became a Conservative M.P.; the second, Charles, of Chilham Castle, ran the great Wibsey iron-works; and the third, Gathorne, became Disraeli's War Secretary and Earl of Cranbrook.²³ The eccentric Stanhope died at Chevening in the same year. Hindley and Brotherton, still representing Ashton and Salford, followed in 1857. Neither achieved any great Parliamentary stature, though Hindley presided over the Peace Society and Brotherton 'was celebrated for moving the adjournment of the House at midnight'.²⁴ Ellesmere, the wealthy and charitable landowner, poet, scientist and businessman, died in the same year. Edwards, after three

defeats at Halifax, sat for the notoriously corrupt borough of Beverley in 1857-1868, was created a baronet in 1866 and died in 1886. William Beckett represented Leeds in 1841-1852 and Ripon until 1857, dying in 1863, at the age of 79.²⁵ Wood, who married John Hardy's daughter, died at 80, in 1871; a granddaughter married Sir John Hardy's son and a grandson married Charles Hardy's daughter. William Rand died in 1868, aged 74, and John Rand in 1873, aged 79. Fletcher of Bury died in 1878, at 82. The ironmaster Pollard survived to his 94th year, in 1887.²⁶

From the 1850's the old agitations were regularly recalled in the obituary columns. Mills, for twenty years the Oldham leader, died in 1854, aged 55, when Doherty — to Shaftesbury, 'one of the most faithful to a cause that ever lived' — also died, in Manchester. Pitkeithley, now a general dealer in that town, died there in 1858, and Pitt, the 66-year-old Dukinfield leader, followed.²⁷ Mallalieu, now a cotton-band manufacturer, died in 1863, aged 67. In that year his associate, Charles Howarth, became a director of the new Co-operative Wholesale Society; he died at 50, in 1868.²⁸ Wildman of Keighley was less fortunate. His wool-top business failed, and sickness and poverty eventually drove him into Bradford workhouse. Admirers of his poetry persuaded Sir Titus Salt to grant him an almshouse in his Saltaire estate, where he died in 1870, aged 67.²⁹ Brook, still a Huddersfield furniture dealer at 73, also died in 1870, and John Leech followed in 1871, aged 68; he had been pensioned by the local Conservative candidate, Serjeant Sleigh, and Ferrand, Shaftesbury, Feversham, Edwards, Akroyd and Starkey.³⁰

The reformers had varied careers. Joseph Firth of Keighley, who died in 1872, aged 76, was an itinerant dealer in Airedale. His fellow mason, the Chartist and Temperance speaker, David Weatherhead, was a prosperous grocer, spiritualist and supporter of Urquhart; he died in 1875, at the age of 72.³¹ Joshua Hobson became a Conservative editor and local government official. He died, a 65-year-old bachelor, in 1876. His friend, Hanson, died a year later at 88, after a chequered career as a weaver, spinner, shopkeeper and upholsterer. Hanson's socialism had also given way to Conservatism, and the former atheist became an Anglican Sunday School teacher.³² Grant, who had

been 'as two right hands' to Shaftesbury, was helped by him and Harrowby, before his death in 1880. Glendinning, at 81 'the oldest woollen manufacturer in Huddersfield', followed three years later.³³ Such events were melancholy news for the dwindling survivors. 'I fear that my zeal is far younger than my powers', Shaftesbury told Balme, in 1876. 'I know not how I should *now* grapple with a Factory Question.' Four years later he commented that

Almost all my old friends and fellow labourers in the Great Factory Conflict are gone to their rest. . . . I had begun to believe that Time and Trade Unions had obliterated me from the memory of the People of Lancashire and Yorkshire. They are not obliterated from mine. . . .

Balme became a local government official, and was active in William McWeeny's Yorkshire Factory Act Reform Association. He supported Walpole's Act of 1867, memorialised Gladstone on Mundella's Bill in 1873 and organised a testimonial for Grant. In 1868 he and Grant solicited 'Royal favour' on Baker, 'the active, able and meritorious Inspector of Factories'. The effort failed, but Baker offered Balme a silver gift 'within the compass of £10', in 1873; relations between Inspectors and reformers had advanced far in forty years. Balme died in 1884. 'He was the last, or the last but one, of all my contemporaries and fellow workers in the movement for Factory legislation', Shaftesbury rather inaccurately told Balme's daughter. He subscribed towards a memorial at Calverley,³⁴ and died himself in the following year.

II

Throughout its history, the Movement was opposed by the greatest industrialists and intellectual figures. Shaftesbury recalled, with some exaggeration, that

I had to break every political connection, to encounter a most formidable array of capitalists, millowners, doctrinaires and men who, by natural impulse, hate all 'humanity-mongers'.

He remembered O'Connell as 'a sneering and bitter opponent'; and

Gladstone ever voted in resistance to my efforts; and Brougham played the doctrinaire. . . . Bright was ever my most malignant

opponent. Cobden, though bitterly hostile, was better than Bright.

Peel was deterred by fears of foreign competition and excessive interference; a Ten Hours Act, claimed O'Connell in 1838, would make Manchester 'a place of tombs'. Baines also 'opposed ten hours as a dangerous restriction', since the Continent and U.S.A. worked 13 or 14 hours; and 'he also objected to all interference with adults'.³⁵ *The Economist* still prophesied 'ruin on all the manufacturing interest', in 1848.

Behind the economic arguments lay an individualist creed which was often fantastically naïve. 'Every man had a Ten Hours Bill already', Brougham insisted, in 1844: '... no man need work longer than he pleased'.³⁶ Horner knew more about the sanctions of dismissal and victimisation: 'no instance had come to his knowledge', in 1845, 'of adult women having expressed any regret at their *rights* being thus far interfered with'.³⁷ But Miss Martineau, who once shocked Coleridge by regarding society simply as 'an aggregate of individuals', was ever ready to translate liberal beliefs into homely terms for humble readers. She told Monckton Milnes that she had seen American girls

fresh and brisk, dancing in the winter evenings and walking in the summer, playing on the piano, attending Emerson's lectures, reading and writing, while working in the mills 70 hours per week.

Her Unitarian liberalism clashed with the idea of aristocratic paternalism. To her, Ashley was 'largely duped' by disreputable informants — and 'all interference of Government with the direction and rewards of industry was a violation of its duty . . .'. But her enthusiasm 'reduced the *laissez-faire* system to absurdity', Mill told Carlyle, in 1833, '... by merely carrying it out to all its consequences'. Brougham himself regretted her 'extreme opinions upon most subjects, without much examination'; Dickens found her a 'wrong-headed . . . vain . . . Humbug'.³⁸

Nineteenth-century readers were constantly regaled with accounts of man's Progress through industry and invention. 'In whatever light we examine the triumphs and achievements of our species over the creation submitted to its power, we explore new sources of wonder', wrote Charles Babbage. The

very machinery held a romantic appeal: 'the fine spinning mills of Manchester were the triumphs of art and the glory of England', to Ure.³⁹ A Baines or a Porter could give statistical evidence of the onward march, and experienced industrialists supported the academic arguments. Fielden and Brotherton were at first the only 'practical men' supporting him, Shaftesbury remembered:

and to the 'practical' prophecies of overthrow of trade, of ruin to the operatives themselves, I could only oppose 'humanity' and general principles.

Despite Press support, he met 'every form of "good-natured" and compassionate contempt'. And on the extreme wing of opponents, Bright was prepared to organise 'so formidable a combination of capital that the House could not legislate against it'.⁴⁰

The leading liberal economists were generally understood to be hostile to the Movement. But in 1919 Alfred Marshall doubted the opposition of 'any eminent economist'; Ricardo apparently did not oppose early legislation, Tooke, McCulloch and Newmarch supported the Acts and only Senior and Lauderdale were hostile. Several modern economic historians have underlined this view, as part of the reassessment of the Industrial Revolution.⁴¹ The individualistic Robert Torrens emerges as the most sympathetic to reform. As an M.P., he supported Ashley in 1833, even defending restriction of adults, as Parliament should balance the effects of Protection. McCulloch also supported Ashley in 1833, though 'he would not interfere between adults and masters'. Senior himself favoured some restriction of children; but he 'utterly disapproved' of the 1844 Act and 1847 Bill, 'so far as they placed adult women on the footing of children'.⁴² The conclusion to be drawn from the researches is generally a modification rather than a denial of the traditional view. The 'classical economists' might relent on children, but not on adults. Fawcett still declared, during his liberal-cum-feminist campaign in 1872, that, 'if grown-up persons overwork, they do it of their own free will'.⁴³ The economists remained the Movement's enemies.

Individualist doctrines were used throughout the whole agitation. In 1844 Milner Gibson voiced a popular sentiment

in opposing 'an interference with [the operatives'] only property — their labour'. To Place,

All legislative interference must be pernicious. Men must be left to themselves to make their own bargains. . . .

His friend Hume was perhaps the most extreme opponent. Since the repeal of the Combination Acts, he boasted in 1846, he had opposed 'every interference by law between masters and men'; the 1824 Act gave 'such perfect liberty and security' that 'all further legislative interference was vicious'. He condemned any compromise with the 'mawkish humanity' and 'erroneous dictates of the humanity-mongers'.⁴⁴

This insistence on the individual's 'free agency' continually prevented effective legislation. Parliament's mistake, declared Hindley, in 1832,

has arisen from supposing that they could effectually legislate for children without including adults. They are not aware that the labour in a mill is, strictly speaking, *family labour*. . . .

Fielden confirmed that progress was hindered by the 'absurd attempt to separate the adult from the child in its labour'.⁴⁵ Even in 1849, when 'very many adult males' were working 14 or 15 hours, Hindley believed that Parliament would oppose 'an invasion of the rights of an Englishman to prevent him from working as long as he pleased'. But, as reformers always pointed out, the operative was compelled to work, whatever the conditions; therefore Labour needed Protection.⁴⁶ The worker was often 'almost entirely at the mercy' of the employer, Sadler declared in 1832; and ten years later Horner reported that operatives faced 'employment on any terms, or starvation'. But Palmerston still condemned the 'vicious and wrong principle' of restricting men, in 1855.

III

The Factory Movement had at first no philosophic answer to Benthamite and economic doctrines. Its early statements were bald assertions: 'any old washerwoman could tell you that ten hours a day is too long for any child to labour', Oastler informed the 1833 Commissioners.⁴⁷ It was only when emotional, humanitarian appeals had failed that the reformers

developed their embracing industrial ideal, generally on the basis of an old-style Toryism. The New Poor Law led to further expansion of the original aims. 'The two questions were, are and ever must be inseparably connected', explained Oastler, in July 1856, for ⁴⁸

the New Poor Law was intended to be used to perpetuate slavery in factories . . . to decrease the wages of the factory operatives [and] . . . to increase the competition for labour in factories.

And the anti-Poor Law struggle not only compelled the reformers to re-examine basic ideals but also drew many of them into ill-defined association with Northern Chartism. 'Much of the so-called Chartist agitation', thought Fox Maule, 'was in reality anti-Poor Law agitation. . . .' ⁴⁹

The oft-demonstrated union of opponents of factory legislation and opponents of the Corn Laws increased the mutual sympathies of reformers and Protectionists. The League alleged that the 'Monopolists' subsidised Chartism, and G. J. Holyoake, a verbose and often inaccurate Radical chronicler, claimed to 'know many who took money'. Holyoake stated that Place showed him a cheque paid for breaking League meetings, and alleged that the money came from Disraeli — which seems unlikely.⁵⁰ But through Ferrand and Oastler there was a much closer connection between Radical operatives and Protectionists. William Rider was no hired Tory hack, but he savagely attacked the anti-Corn Law campaigners : ⁵¹

Who are that blustering, canting crew,
Who keep the cheap loaf in our view,
And would from us more profit screw?
The League.

The Short Time Committees contained few free traders.

Many Liberals ascribed Protectionist support to antipathy to free trade manufacturers ; and this idea has had a long and wide currency. Ashley himself later considered that the majority in 1847 'were governed, not by love to the cause, but by anger towards Peel and the Anti-Corn Law League'. And Marx explained the 'secret history' of the victory, in 1853 : ⁵²

The landed aristocracy having received a deadly blow by the actual abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846, took their vengeance by forcing the Ten Hours Bill of 1847 upon Parliament.

With varying degrees of emphasis, historians have generally accepted this view of Protectionist motives — or have denied any party division.⁵³ But neo-Marxist doctrines of opponents' invariably self-interested motivation are as unsatisfactory as Marx's inaccurate accounts of the Movement's history.⁵⁴ Mere economics cannot explain the Parliamentary divisions; motives and interests were mingled, and the factory contest was not merely part of a war between Land and Industry. Protectionists had supported factory reform before Villiers' motion first appeared; and some reformers voted for repeal. If many Southern squires knew little of industry, such Tory landowners as Feversham, Ferrand, Stuart-Wortley and Ellesmere were certainly not ignorant rustics; and they received detailed information from such Tory industrialists as Wood, Walker, Edwards and Hornby. Political rather than economic considerations were paramount, and the League's anti-aristocratic designs were largely obsolete in an England of noble railway promoters and colliery owners. No social difference made Harewood champion Yorkshire Protectionism and Fitzwilliam support Free Trade — or Wood subsidise the factory reformers and the Ashworths finance the League.

Tory paternalism may have been exaggerated on occasion, and was doubtless mixed by some with less worthy motives. But it, with the forces of Evangelical piety and some early manifestations of Tractarian social sympathies, played an important role. The 1844 and 1847 division lists have been used as evidence of a tardy Protectionist conversion.⁵⁵ But such a thesis ignores both the history of the agitation and the peculiar circumstances in 1844, when Peel was threatening resignation. Nearly twenty years after the victory, Shaftesbury was fairer to his supporters, recalling the influence of Peel's 'malevolence':⁵⁶

The Tory country gentlemen reversed their votes; but in 1847, indignant with Peel on the ground of Corn Law repeal, they returned to the cause of the factory children.

Anger with Peel played a part, but freedom from his control was equally important. Writers who have made Whig and Liberal support the main prop of factory reform also ignore the general Whig preference for 11 hours, as late as 1847. Contemporaries did not share this view. 'The most ardent

champions of the Ten Hours Bill in the present House of Commons', affirmed the League, in 1846,

are Mr. Bankes, Mr. Colquhoun, Mr. Ferrand, Lord George Bentinck and the rest of the 'gentlemen below the gangway'. Among the manufacturing capitalists, we do not know one advocate of the Ten Hours Bill who has not been a supporter of the Corn Law. Mr. Fielden, it is true, has voted for Free Trade, but in public and private he has spoken against it.

Both the leaders and the committees, it pointed out, had constantly opposed Free Trade. This view was exaggerated, but widely held: the 'greatly surprised' *Dundee Advertiser* protested when some Whigs supported Duncombe's Laceworks Bill in 1846: ⁵⁷

The *real* Free Traders all voted against the interference. . . . Most of the Protectionists, with their leader, Lord George Bentinck, voted, as might have been anticipated, for the Bill and against the Government. . . . The Protectionists are at least consistent in their vote in favour of the Factory Bill; but Lord John Russell is now not only inconsistent with his former acts and professions on this very subject, but we humbly think that at the moment his vote for Free Trade cannot be reconciled with the vote which he has just now given upon the Factory question.

The lists of prominent supporters compiled by Grant consisted largely of Conservatives, and the majority of leaders commemorated in 1847 were also Tories. From 1830 the Movement was supported by many Tory and some other politicians, landowners, industrialists, clergy, medical practitioners and operatives, and was opposed by 'Liberals' of the same classes. There was substantial truth in Newdegate's claim that the Protectionists

had proved themselves Protectionists of the interests of the poor . . . of the labour of young people [and] . . . of the Christian character of the State. . . .

And there was truth in the view of the eccentric, industry-hating Sibthorp — the delight of mid-century *Punch* cartoonists — that protection of labour and of the land went together.⁵⁸

By the 'forties the Movement's demands had considerably broadened. Reformers now advocated women's return to their 'true sphere' of domestic labour, hoping to increase males'

opportunities, but setting off 'women's rights' sentiments.⁵⁹ Lancashire spinners hoped to spread employment by limiting adults' hours; ⁶⁰ and some wanted to maintain children's wages, limit the numbers of child-workers and retain traditional working relationships. The committees also made a major change in methods from the excited campaigns of the 'thirties; the York and Wibsey rallies were, significantly, never repeated. Some sympathisers always opposed the whole factory system, preferring to look back — or forward — to some ideal utopia. And in addition to attacking long hours, reformers made charges about ill health, immorality, drunkenness, drug-taking, the separation of families, illiteracy, the lack of domestic training and varied cruelties. Not all of the particular allegations bear examination, and most are incapable of detailed checking; but the very subjects indicated the direction of the Movement's social and 'moral' thinking.

If rhetorical violence — which characterised much contemporary oratory, from Parliament's 'beastly bellowings' to chapel sermons — is discounted, the Movement appears constitutional, orderly and restrained. 'Humanitarianism was the parent, if Socialism was the offspring, of the factory movement', wrote Dicey; ⁶¹ founded by Wilberforce's Yorkshire Tory supporters, it was largely modelled on the anti-slavery movement. Evangelicalism provided both the hard core of original leaders and their vocabulary.⁶² The reformers were never able to afford a 'missionary' corps, although they periodically appointed paid agents. But the adoption of a Methodist-type organisation, with Conference supreme, was a political innovation. The local committees were spontaneously and spasmodically organised.⁶³ Their finances depended primarily upon £40,000 donated by Wood, considerable sums from the Fieldens, and Oastler's life savings; the League was the pioneer of centralised and highly financed agitation.

During its history, the Movement made several tactical errors, notably, perhaps, in refusing co-operation with the 1833 Commissioners and the Inspectors. Local policy variations, particularly over restricting adults, were regularly 'exposed' by opponents. The vacillations of such Radicals as Hindley, Brotherton and Aglionby — and later of Ashley — also retarded progress. Some opponents professed to believe that 'the ally

[and] chief active promoter' of reform was 'the operative agitator', who 'avoided the necessity of labour by taking on himself the more easy employment of declaiming'. In his 'revelations' about Trade Unions, Tufnell ascribed 'the secret source of nine-tenths of the clamour' to the spinners — 'invariably the most strenuous, and in many cases the only supporters', primarily hoping to save their funds. Both as a writer and a Commissioner, he claimed that factory cruelties, 'if practised at all, were only practised by' the spinners.⁶⁴ But union participation was not, in fact, very important, except in some Lancashire towns — although reformers periodically discussed strike action. Throughout the agitation, the greatest danger was the extraordinary fascination exerted by the almost meaningless word 'Radical'; Whig Reform, Owenite socialism, Chartism and, sometimes, Trade Unionism, all distracted attention, at different times.

Cyclical fluctuations in the economy naturally had some correlation with the force of reform movements. But national trends were often less important than local variations in employment, traditions, relationships, organisation and leadership. In any case, the Movement's strength did not invariably rise with the incidence of unemployment, high prices or wage cuts; militant discontent might, and often did, move to more extreme positions. The factory agitation rose in the 'twenties, when real wages were rising, and developed in the 'thirties; but it was comparatively inactive during the depressed period from 1837, reviving in the prosperous years after 1843 and achieving victory during the slump of 1847.⁶⁵

There was some justification for reformers' suspicions of one group of later sympathisers, the Inspectors, who were disliked by both sides of industry but for some years accepted the masters' case. The 1833 Act allowed Inspectors to enter factories and factory schools at any time, take evidence on oath, issue regulations and try cases. The employers resented such extraordinary powers. 'The Inspector's *will* was *law without appeal*', complained R. H. Greg; 'his mere *ipse dixit*, proclaimed in two successive local newspapers, *was the law of the land*.'⁶⁶ But the masters condemned even the superintendents' limited powers, while reformers were long convinced that the Inspectorate would invariably oppose them. Until 1836 the

Inspectors enforced the law lightly; and afterwards the magistrates' reluctance to impose adequate penalties defeated them. As pioneers of a new system, the officials naturally took some time to evolve their code of etiquette. The Inspectors had some trouble with their superintendents, and had to dismiss some for accepting bribes or pocketing fines; and relations with the Home Office were delicate. The most sorry episode in the early history of inspection was the Melbourne Government's use of the Inspectors' staffs as virtual spies on the Chartists — a story revealed by Fielden in July 1840.⁶⁷ But the Inspectors' powers and status were gradually modified. From 1836 uniform regulations on 'Time Registers' were issued, and from 1837 the Law Officers examined instructions before publication and Inspectors were discouraged from hearing cases. In 1838 Maule proposed to end individual regulations, which were finally abolished by Graham in 1844, when, at last, superintendents gained full rights of entry and mill-owning justices were prevented from hearing cases on their own or relations' property.

The Inspectorate's organisation also provoked controversy. The Benthamites hoped for 'an authority wholly removed from all political contentions and influence, and responsible only to Parliament';⁶⁸ and Poulett Thomson wished to create an Inspector-General in 1839. But only in 1844 did the process of centralisation reach the stage of providing a London office; the first secretary was Alexander Redgrave, later Chief Inspector in 1878-1891. The original wide powers, by which, complained Greg, 'not only was the inspector a maker of the law, but an administrator of it', were narrowed. Increasingly, the Inspectors rid themselves of the task of interpreting the law; and the Home Office, particularly under Graham, asserted its authority over the officials' early individualism.⁶⁹ The new principle was gradually accepted.

IV

In its essential Toryism, the Factory Movement affected national politics. It provided sometimes tenuous links between the Country Party and the working classes. Shaftesbury believed that its success prevented revolution. And the Move-

ment helped to develop a Radical tradition in Conservatism, later expanded by such varied personalities as Disraeli, Lord Randolph Churchill, Michael Maltman Barry, James Mawdsley and Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck. Sir John Gorst's definition of Tory Democracy shared the ideas of Ferrand and Oastler;⁷⁰ and the mysterious Barry — associate of Marx, socialist intriguer and four times a Conservative candidate — became a Tory because of the party's record on factory legislation.⁷¹ In 1868 Tory election propaganda claimed that

The Ten Hours Bill, a Tory measure, put an end to that system of continuous toil and ignorance which Mr. Bright and the section of the Liberal Party which he represents did their best to perpetuate in the factories.

Four years later Disraeli discussed further legislation with Grant; and when the 'Glasgow Short Hours Association' thanked him, in 1873, for his aid, he asserted that supporting the 1847 Act was 'one of the most satisfactory incidents' in his life.⁷² In 1874 Disraeli's Government restored the 10 hours' day, and in 1878 Cross passed his great consolidating Act. When Disraeli moved to the Lords, British and Irish reformers sent a congratulatory and grateful address. The Conservatives continued to point to their record; and the modern party has not neglected to list the Ten Hours Act among its past achievements.⁷³

As Dicey observed, 'the factory movement introduced socialistic enactments into the law of England, and gave prestige and authority to the ideas of Collectivism'.⁷⁴ The Movement's 'socialism' was indeed often noted. Cobden sneered at the 'socialist doctrines of the fools' on the Tory benches, and Melbourne once told the Queen that Ashley was 'the greatest Jacobin in her Majesty's dominions'. This connection led to considerable socialist interest in the Movement, later in the century. While Tories promoted reform, proclaimed *Justice*, Bright and Cobden 'fought like tigers in favour of child slavery'; and Victor Grayson pointed out that 'out of 30 Factory Acts . . . over 20 were passed by the Conservatives' — which Mundella thought was 'to their immortal honour'.⁷⁵ Ben Turner, a twentieth-century Yorkshire union leader, considered that Oastler was

an excellent socialist without knowing it, like his own friend, Sir Charles Wilson, whom he claimed as a first-class Tory Socialist. . . .

In the years before the First World War Oastler's Bradford statue became something of a shrine for annual pilgrimages by the 'Socialist Sunday School Union', to hear Joseph Burgess and F. W. Jowett.⁷⁶ Much of this Conservative and Socialist declamation was, of course, merely party propaganda; both groups had an interest in attacking Liberalism. But the affinities between the two supporters of State intervention led some late Victorian Liberals to regard the new socialism as a Tory manœuvre; Herbert Spencer condemned even Gladstonian reform as 'the new Toryism'.⁷⁷

Ferrand, Oastler and many Northern reformers represented an ancient Toryism, local, paternal and long 'outdated' in 'progressive' circles. They adopted traditional dislike of centralisation against Benthamite social planning, and old doctrines of social cohesion against liberal individualism. They announced no strictly 'new' philosophies, but sought to leaven squirearchic Toryism's defence of Church and State by stressing the social duties of both. The liberalised creeds of Tamworth were loathsome:

all knew what a Tory was, or should be; all were well acquainted with Whigs and Whiggism, and could respect an honest Radical; but a Liberal Conservative was a political nondescript.

Oastler never changed his party title: he remained 'an old-fashioned ultra-Tory'.⁷⁸ These sentiments were shared by Auty, Ferrand, Pollard and the Operative Conservatives of the 'thirties and the Working Men Conservatives three decades later; despite adopting his title, few Tory operatives followed Peel's social policies. Consequently, the Movement's 'political theory' was a restatement of old creeds, looking back to the manor-house and parsonage when many workers' visions were limited to the factory and 'Bastille'. Its romantic aspects were best expressed by 'Young England', and its blunt economics appealed to Carlyle: 'we could not have prosperous cotton trades at the expense of keeping the Devil a partner in them'.⁷⁹ Such doctrines could provoke easy parody, when announced by a Sibthorp. But the Factory Movement was broadly based in the North.

V

Most leading reformers were Anglicans, who considerably influenced the revival of the Church's social witness. Shaftesbury regularly complained of the lack of religious support : ⁸⁰

In very few instances did any millowner appear on the platform with me; in still fewer cases, the ministers of any religious denomination. . . . I had more aid from the medical than the divine profession. . . .

Shaftesbury was given to recording such laments in his private memoranda; but he grossly under-estimated Northern clerical support — an error perpetuated by later writers. Half-forgotten Northern clergymen were the forerunners of F. D. Maurice's mid-century 'Christian Socialism', Stewart Headlam's later Catholic communism and the late-century episcopal reformers. From the first, Evangelical Tory clergymen were among the Movement's pioneers, later to be joined by a generation influenced by the Tractarians.

'Parson Bull', the foremost early clerical supporter, advocated reform because industrial justice was

calculated to promote the general good of society and to cherish in the poor a due respect for Christianity and the Laws.

The people must have leisure time 'to reflect, to improve their minds, instruct their families and to worship their God'. Bull advocated the revival of Convocation and the reform of the Church : ⁸¹

The Church, as she is, cannot stand. She must be cleaned, and that promptly, from her real abuses, or she must fall and none can save her. Let her be made the Poor Man's Church, and then the God of the Poor will bless us.

He gained the support of the Bradford clergy, notably Boddington, Frost and Morgan; and successive vicars of Bradford, Heap, Scoresby and Burnett, gave their aid. At Leeds Fawcett helped the early agitation, and his successor as vicar, the great Dr. Hook, became a leading speaker, followed by most of his clergy, especially Thomas Nunns. James Franks and Josiah Bateman, successive vicars of Huddersfield, John Buckworth

and Thomas Allbutt of Dewsbury and William Busfeild — Ferrand's uncle and a rare Liberal supporter — at Keighley, all led their local clergy. And men like Jenkins of Pudsey, Hall of Idle, John Sharp of Wakefield — and his son John, of Horbury — Maddock of Tadcaster and Madden and Oglesby of Woodhouse also played considerable roles.

In Lancashire clerical support was not initially so strong; the agitators tended to be Radical nonconformists. But interest greatly developed. Canon Wray of Manchester, Irvine of Leigh, Molesworth of Rochdale, Parr of Preston, Adamson of Padiham, Bardsley of Burnley and others were noteworthy supporters in the 'forties. This Christian support was based primarily on moral grounds. 'You factory masters', Franks once told John Wood, 'do more harm than all we clergymen can do good.'⁸²

In addition to most of the clergy of the manufacturing areas, several Bishops aided the Movement. The first was George Law, Bishop of Chester in 1812-1824 and of Bath and Wells until 1845, who spoke in the 1818 debates. Henry Ryder, the Evangelical Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry in 1824-1836 and brother of Lord Harrowby, was the Movement's first episcopal 'convert'. The Primates, William Howley of Canterbury and Edward Harcourt of York, both favoured the 1832 Bill. C. T. Longley, the first Bishop of Ripon, was a supporter in the 'forties, and as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1863, 'looked back with deep interest to the successful struggle'.⁸³ On a visit to Harrogate during the early agitation, Oastler met William van Mildert, Bishop of Durham in 1826-1836, of whom Ashley wrote that 'a better man, or a more munificent soul, never flourished in the whole catalogue of our bishops . . .'. Oastler later remembered that van Mildert praised his campaign:

It is a work which every Bishop and minister of Christ should take to heart: the Church of England is deeply interested in the success of your labours. In all your principles I am heartily with you. . . .

The Bishop objected to Oastler's violent phrases, but accepted his explanation.⁸⁴

No doubt, the bitterness of some Northern controversies dissuaded some gentle souls from participating. But Oastler insisted, in 1850, that his critics

should consider the deep, solemn, overwhelming conviction in my mind. . . . I saw young and helpless neighbours dying excruciatingly. . . . I heard their groans, I watched their tears; I knew they relied on me, they told me so. I was visited by their weeping mothers. . . . I saw full-grown athletic men whose only labour was to carry their little ones to the mills. . . . To have been cool, calm and unmoved when surrounded by such circumstances, would have required a colder heart than mine. . . .

He never forgot the sight of Habergam crawling up the drive at Fixby, or the succession of crippled children whom he introduced to Sadler's Committee. Certainly he could not use 'drawing room language'. But, 'strong though his language was', declared Bull, 'he more than justified it'.⁸⁵ The memory of early events gave the Movement emotional undertones which burst out in strong words on occasions through its history.

But in spite of any fears aroused by violent oratory, the Movement's clerical support was much stronger than has been generally recognised. The Bishops' speeches in 1847 raised bitter sneers from opponents. And in 1850 a Bolton Unitarian, Franklin Baker, found it necessary to defend 'the moral tone of the Factory System' from clerical attacks, especially Henry Worsley's prize essay on 'Juvenile Depravity'.⁸⁶ The support of the Church of England in the North — almost universal except at Halifax — was a vital factor in the Movement's history; yet it has been strangely neglected, under-estimated or even denied.

Religious support remained predominantly Anglican; such Roman Catholics as Doherty and Hearne and Methodists like 'Billy' Dawson were exceptions among their co-religionists. Dissenters, apart from the Primitive Methodists, were almost always hostile. 'There is poverty breaking the spirits and ruining the morals and souls of men', wrote a Congregationalist reviewer in 1844, 'but we have no hope from any quixotic attempt to make people give more than is necessary for what they want, or ask a price for things they cannot get.'⁸⁷ The three Quakers most closely connected with the agitation were Bright and the Ashworths, its most bitter opponents. It was only later that official nonconformist speakers gave support. 'Capital and Labour should be like twin figures', declared the Baptist H. Watts, at Stanningley in 1865. 'They should walk

arm-in-arm; they should smile in each other's face. . . .'
But by then he could support the Ten Hours principle.⁸⁸ In Scotland, most denominations gave some support, but undoubtedly the strongest Christian aid came from men who joined the 1843 secession, including Lockhart Gordon of Aberdeen, James Begg of Edinburgh and George Lewis of Dundee among ministers, and Alexander Thompson of Banchory, a philanthropic Tory laird.⁸⁹ But the agitation in Liberal Scotland never reached the English strength.

Anglican theology and sentiment not only influenced clerical supporters, but provided motives for Sadler, Oastler, Shaftesbury, Inglis, Balme, John Wood, Osburn and many others. Many committees centred on Tory groups associated with the parish churches. And if Tory support discouraged revolutionary outbreaks, the Church's aid probably weakened anti-clericalism. The Factory Movement helped the Church to face the social and moral problems posed by industry; and it established a tradition of social interest disconnectedly maintained ever since. The Christian Socialists' declaration in 1848 that 'Politics for the People cannot be separated from Religion' was echoed by Oastler, who ⁹⁰

gathered his politics from the Holy Scriptures . . . and so, without any ceremony declined to separate his politics from his Religion.

Maurice's Toryism was, indeed, curiously akin to Oastler's: he 'must have Monarchy, Aristocracy and Socialism, or rather Humanity, recognised as necessary elements and conditions of an organic Christianity'.⁹¹

Later Christian Socialists often used the contrast between the 'social' state and individualism, which the reformers had drawn in days when 'socialism' was a term of abuse, usually involving atheism and immorality. A shocked Anglican considered, in 1850, that 'the oligarchic tendencies of the wealthy had raised up in antagonism Socialism among the masses'.⁹² But, as a Protectionist opponent of Truck, relays and victimisation, the writer was as 'socialistic' as Maurice's supporters. In any history of Christian social interest the Anglican supporters of factory reform deserve a special place. And in the history of the Factory Movement they must figure prominently.

VI

The strange medley of country squires and sallow artisans, humanitarian priests and freethinking revolutionaries who formed the personnel of the Factory Movement had a lasting influence on British social history. Partly composed of 'doomed' and decaying groups — the 'feudal' landowner and the domestic workman — the Movement nevertheless affected modern conceptions of social welfare. With Ashley, the reformers declared that 'the State had an interest and a right to watch over and provide for the moral and physical well-being of her people'.⁹³ Whether seen as the flowering of Evangelical Toryism or as an early assertion of the 'social conscience', the Movement's achievements were among the first, halting steps towards the twentieth century Welfare State.

The North has changed dramatically in the century since the Movement ended its work. Fixby Hall became a golf clubhouse, Ferrand's S. Ives a research station and Duncombe Park a school. The Ramsdens no longer own Huddersfield, and the squirearchic families who aided the Movement are often only remembered in tavern signs. The old landmarks have disappeared. The manufacturers' mansions have declined from their Gothic splendour, and the dark satanic mills have largely yielded to glass and concrete palaces. The *Mercury* long ago combined with the *Intelligencer's* successor. The Marshalls moved to America — and other great masters into the Peerage. Lancashire cotton manufacturers have long ceased to extol the virtues of Free Trade; and reports of 'victimisation' in trade union circles are unlikely to refer to labour leaders' hardships. The Factory Movement itself is largely forgotten, for it achieved its purposes without revolution or a 'class war'. But in that, perhaps, lay its greatest achievement.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

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56. J. Wesley: *Journal*, VII, 300; W. J. Warner: *Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution* (1930), 151, 177-8; *The Weavers' Pocket Book* (Dundee, 1766).

57. J. L. and B. Hammond: *The Town Labourer* (1949 ed.), I, 145-6; *NSA*, III, 23.

58. See F. D. Klingender: *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (1947).

59. Knowles, 92 n.; J. D. Chambers: *The Vale of Trent, 1670-1800* (1957), 61; Unwin, 166-74; S. Greg: *Two Letters to L. Horner* (1840); Collier, *art. cit.*; Ashton, *Industrial Revolution*, 115; Fitton, Wadsworth, 104 seq.

60. *Ann. Reg.*, 1792; Bourne, II, 193; T. Pennant: *History of . . . Holywell* (1796), 214-15; Lady T. Lewis: *Extracts from the Journal . . . of Miss Berry* (1865), II, 302-5; *NSA*, VI, 323; T. Johnston: *History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1946 ed.), 318.

61. J. Myles: *Chapters in the Life of a Dundee Factory Boy* (Dundee, 1850).

62. See W. H. Marwick: *Economic Developments in Victorian Scotland* (1936), 139.

63. Hutchins and Harrison, 9, 18; Holden, 161; Aikin, 219-20, 456; J. Fielden: *The Curse of the Factory System* (1836), 6.

64. Hutchins and Harrison, 11-13; Croft, 7-11.

65. T. Perceval: *Resolutions for . . . Manchester Board of Health*, 25 Jan. 1796; *PP*, 1816, III, 377.

66. T. D. Whitaker: *History of the Original Parish of Whalley* (1801), qu. George, 115; *A Sermon preached at . . . Salesbury* (1807), 4 seq.

67. T. Whitaker: *Four Letters to Mr. J. Mayer of Stockport* (Manchester, 1798), 13; W. Morgan: *The Parish Priest Pourtrayed* (1841), 98.

68. See W. H. Hutt: 'The Factory System of the Early Nineteenth Century' (*Economica*, VI, 1: Mar. 1926) and in F. A. Hayek: *Capitalism and the Historians* (1954), 160 seq.

69. 20 Geo. II, c. 19; 32 Geo. III, c. 57; 7 Geo. III, c. 39.

70. *PP*, 1801-2, I, 225, 369; 42 *Geo.* III, c. 73; Espinasse, II, ch. 3.
71. *PP*, 1814-15, V; 56 *Geo.* III, c. 139.
72. *Report . . . upon some Observations on the late Act . . .* (1802); *PP*, 1816, III, 227.
73. R. Owen: *A New View of Society* (1813), ed. G. D. H. Cole, 1949.
74. M. Cole: *R. Owen of New Lanark* (1953), 95-7; 'Alfred', I, 37 seq.; R. Owen: *Life* (1857), 115, *Observations on the Effect of the Manufacturing System* (1815).
75. *PP*, 1814-15, II, 735, 739; Owen, *Observations*.
76. *PP*, 1816, III, 29-36, 41-9, 58-60, 191-208; *DNB*, XII, 137, V, 202 (Cooper, Blane).
77. *PP*, 1816, III, 5-11, 16-20, 49-58, 162-78, 339-81; *DNB*, XXXII, 360 (Lee).
78. D. Owen: *Threading My Way* (1874).
79. *PP*, 1816, III, 20-8, 36-40, 86-111, 113, 121-7, 131-2, 323-31, 334-9, 382-3.
80. *Ib.* 132-4, 178-85, 210, 288-93, 271-6, 294-304, 332-4.
81. *Ib.* 60-73, 129-31, 186-90, 210-27, 305-7, 311-22.
82. G. B. Wood: 'Weston Hall' (*Yorkshire Life Illustrated*, Apr. 1955); Klingender, 99; *PP*, 1840, X, 6th Report, 12; 'Alfred', I, 61-4.
83. *Information concerning the State of Children employed in Cotton Manufactories* (Manchester, 1818), 4-28; *Answers to Certain Objections made to Sir R. Peel's Bill* (Manchester, 1819), 66-7.
84. *An Enquiry into the . . . Bill . . .* (1818); R. Owen: *On the Employment of Children in Manufactories* (1818).
85. J. Simmons: *Southey* (1945), 153; H. C. Robinson, *Diary*, II, 93; L. Simond: *Journal of a Tour . . .* (1815), I, 278; Croft, 16-17; Sykes, 317-19.
86. *PP*, 1818, I, 87, 91; *Hansard*, 1S, XXXVII, XXXVIII, *passim*; N. Gash: *Mr. Secretary Peel* (1961), 230-1.
87. *Lords' Sessional Papers*, 1818, IX, 20, 30 seq., 50, 58, etc.; *CP*, IV, 359, VII, 494-5, *DNB*, XXXV, 355-7 (Kenyon, Lauderdale), XXXVIII, 186, E. W. Brockbank: *Honorary Medical Staff of Manchester Infirmary* (Manchester, 1904), 191-9 (Holme).
88. *Observations, &c., as to the Ages of Persons employed in the Cotton Mills of Manchester* (Manchester, 1819), 11; Mackintosh, *Diary*, 27 Apr. 1818; *PP*, 1837-8, VIII.
89. Aspinall, 313-8; Read, 75 (Norris); *HO*, 42/183, 184, 41/4/253.
90. *A Summary of . . . Evidence on . . . the Cotton Factory Bill* (Manchester, n.d.); Aspinall, 293-4; *HO*, 42/180.
91. *Answers*, 8-32.
92. 'Alfred', I, 76-7; *Lords' Sessional Papers*, 1819, XVI *passim*.
93. 59 *Geo.* III, c. 66; *PP*, 1824, V, 412.
94. *An Enquiry*, 27; *PP*, 1819-20, I, 97; 60 *Geo.* III, c. 5.
95. Aspinall, 370; R. Guest: *Compendious History of the Cotton Manufacture* (Manchester, 1823), 38; *HO*, 40/18.
96. P. Grant: *The THB . . .* (Manchester, 1866), 15; R. W. Cooke-Taylor: *The Factory System and the Factory Acts* (1894), *passim*; *BLP*, i (21 Sept. 1832).
97. *Hansard*, 2S, XIII, 421; *PP*, 1825, I, 297, 303; M. Joyce: *My Friend H* (1948), 184-7.

98. Redford, *Manchester Merchants*, 229; Grant, 15; W. Hall: *Vindication of the Chorley Spinners* (Manchester, 1825), 21.
99. *A Sketch of the Hours of Labour, Meal-Times, &c. in Manchester* . . . (1825).
100. 6 Geo. IV, c. 63.
101. *The Conciliator*, 29 Nov., 13 Dec. 1828.
102. *Manchester Gazette*, 24 Jan. 1829; J. Whittle: *Address on the State of the Cotton Trade* (Manchester, 1829), 3; J. Mellor: *Letter . . . on the Present Distress* . . . (n.p., 1829), 1-3.
103. *PP*, 1829, I, 483; 10 Geo. IV, c. 51.
104. See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of M. T. Sadler* (1842) and my articles, 'Sadler of Leeds: Christian Reformer' (*York Quarterly*, 6: Feb. 1958) and 'M. T. Sadler' (*Univ. of Leeds Rev.*, VII, 2: Dec. 1960).
105. *ER*, LI, 102 (July 1830); cf. *Ib.*, L, 100 (Jan. 1830), *QR*, XLV, 89, 90 (Apr., July 1831) and Sadler's *Reply to the Edinburgh Reviewer* (1831).
106. Samuel Fenton's MS. diary, 22 Jan. 1829 (LRL).
107. *Ib. passim*; *Memoirs*, 131-49.
108. W. Carpenter: *Machinery as it affects the Industrious Classes* (1844), 42.

CHAPTER TWO

1. 'Josephus Beddome' pamphlets, Jan., Mar. 1830.
2. Place to Hume, 7 Jan. (G. Wallas: *The Life of F. Place* (1918), 175).
3. *MG*, 27 Feb.; *UTC*, 27 Mar., etc.; *PMA*, 23 June 1832.
4. Baines, *Life*, ch. xi; Gooder, II, 156; *The Home*, II, 41 (7 Feb. 1852).
5. See Driver, 6-35, Croft, 51-6, and R. B. M. Hutton: 'R. Oastler' (*Univ. of Leeds Rev.*, VI, 4: Dec. 1959).
6. R. Oastler: *Vicarial Tithes, Halifax* . . . (Halifax, 1827).
7. Oastler's accounts in *Facts and Plain Words* (Leeds, 1833), 2-3, *WPG*, 5 Sept. 1835, *FP*, I, 4, 14 (23 Jan., 3 Apr. 1841) and *The Home*, II, 41-2 (7, 14 Feb. 1852); cf. H. de B. Gibbins: *English Social Reformers* (1892), 120; 'Alfred', I, 95-7; Hutchins and Harrison, 44; Croft, 21-2; Driver, 36-41.
8. In 1829 the *LM* sold 5200 copies weekly, compared to the *LI*'s 1500 in 1831 (F. Beckwith: 'Introductory Account of the *LI*', *Thoresby Soc. Pub.*, XL, 3: 1955). Cf. D. Read: *Press and People* (1961), 74 seq., 108 seq.
9. *LM*, 9 Oct. ('My letter was then in their hands', noted Oastler, in his Press cuttings volume), 16 Oct.
10. *LI*, 21 Oct., 11 Nov., 9 Dec.; *LM*, 23, 30 Oct., 6, 13, 20 Nov., 4, 24 Dec.
11. *LI*, 21 Oct., *LM*, 6 Nov.; Grant, 22.
12. Wood to Oastler (in LUL); *HCC*, 20, 27 Nov.; *LI*, 25 Nov., 9 Dec.; *LM*, 27 Nov., 4 Dec.
13. G. Condry: *Essay on the Elective Right* (1831), 47-8.
14. *QR*, XLIV, 87 (Jan. 1831), 296.
15. Tufnell, 100 seq.; *LI*, *passim*.
16. *LM*, 5 Feb.
17. *HHE*, 5, 12 Mar.; cf. Grant, 24-7, Driver, 547-50.
18. *PP*, 1830-1, I, 121 (17 Feb.); *Hansard*, 3rd Ser., II, 624.

19. *LM*, 19 Feb., 5, 12 Mar., 2, 9, 16, 23 Apr., *LP*, 19 Mar., 16, 23 Apr., *HHE*, 12 Mar., *LI*, 14, 21 Apr., *VP*, 16, 23 Apr. gave comments.
20. *LM*, 19, 26, *LI*, 24, *LP*, 26 Mar.
21. See F. Boase: *Modern English Biography* (Truro, 1901), III, 191.
22. J. K. Walker: *On the late Population Returns . . .* (n.p., 1831), 2, 3.
23. C. T. Thackrah: *The Effects of the Principal Arts, Trades and Professions . . . on Health and Longevity*: the first edition (1831) had 'particular reference to the Trades and Manufactures of Leeds', the second (1832) is reprinted in A. Meiklejohn: *The Life, Work and Times of C. T. Thackrah* (Edinburgh, 1957), here quoted pp. 80-2, 146. Cf. R. V. Taylor: *Biographia Leodiensis* (1865), 344-8.
24. W. R. Greg: *Enquiry into the State of the Manufacturing Population* (1831), 12-13, 27, 28, 35. The paper was ascribed to Greg in *MT*, 23 Mar. 1833.
25. *HHE*, 19, 26 Mar.
26. *PP*, 1830-1, I, 127, 135; 1831, I, 345, 353 (24 Mar., 22 Apr., 4, 18 July).
27. Sykes, 320-1; *Humanity against Tyranny* (Huddersfield, 1831); *The Woodites' Forget-me-not* (Huddersfield, 1833), 5.
28. *LI*, 14, *LM*, *LP*, 16, 23, *DA*, 14, 28 Apr.
29. Leeds STC to Hobhouse, 25 Mar. (*LM*, 2 Apr.); *VP*, 16 Apr.
30. *HHE*, 2, 9, 16, 30, *LM*, 2, 9, 30, *LI*, 7, 14, 28, *LP*, 30 Apr.
31. *LI*, 28, *LP*, 30 Apr.
32. 'Alfred', I, 123; Croft, 28 seq.; *FP*, III, 51 (23 Dec. 1843); *The Home*, II, 45-6 (6, 13 Mar. 1852).
33. *Hansard*, IV, 501; *PP*, 1831, 345, 353.
34. *LI*, 11, 18 Aug.; Huddersfield petition, 3 Aug.; *Humanity* . . ., *op. cit.*
35. 1 and 2 Will. IV, c. 39.
36. *Humanity*, 5.
37. *LI*, 20 Oct.
38. Hobhouse to Oastler, 16 Nov., Oastler reply, 19 Nov. (*LI*, 24 Nov.). On Scottish opposition, see *DA*, 14, 28 Apr., 27 Oct., 10, 17 Nov. 1831, 26 Jan. 1832.
39. Sadler to Oastler, 1, 20, 22 Sept.
40. Sadler to Oastler, 2, 20 Nov.
41. *LM*, 30 Apr., 15, 22, 29 Sept., 6, 20 Oct., 5, 19, 26 Nov., 3 Dec.; *LI*, 1, 22, 29 Sept., 6, 13, 20 Oct., 10, 24 Nov., 1 Dec.; *LP*, 24 Sept., 1, 8, 22, 29 Oct.; *HHE*, 27 Aug., 10 Sept.
42. *To Friendly Societies and Unions of all descriptions* (Leech), *LP*, 5 Nov. Benbow was currently campaigning for a General Strike (*PMG*, 1, 22 Oct., 5, 26 Nov.).
43. *LI*, 20, *LP*, 22 Oct.; *Humanity*, 33-41; 'Alfred', I, 118-20.
44. *LM*, 24 Sept.; *The Rev. R. Watson, Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Sadler* (20 Sept.); *LP*, *LM*, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Oct., 5 Nov., *LI*, 29 Sept., 6, 13, 20, 27 Oct.
45. Sadler posters, 12, 26 Sept.
46. *LI*, 10 Nov., 1, 8 Dec., *LP*, 12 Nov., *LM*, 26 Nov., 3 Dec.; C. Richardson: *Address to the Working Classes of Leeds and the WR* (10 Dec.), 6.
47. *LM*, 10, 17, *LP*, 17, *LI*, 15 Dec.; *Outline of Proceedings . . .* (Leeds, 1831); R. Oastler: *Exposition of the Factory System* (Leeds, 1831).

48. *Report of the Proceedings of the Huddersfield and Bradford Meetings* (Leeds, 1831). On Bull, see J. C. Gill: *The Ten Hours Parson* (1959).
49. *LI*, 10, *LM*, *LP*, 12 Jan., *Standard*, 14 Jan., *PMA*, 25 Feb.; *Report of Proceedings* . . . (Leeds, 1831).
50. *LI*, 2 Feb.; *The THB.*, *Keighley Meeting* (Leeds, 1832).
51. *LI*, 9 Feb.; *Dewsbury Meeting on the Factory Bill* (Leeds, 1832).
52. *LI*, 9 Mar., *LM*, *LP*, 11 Mar.; *Mr. Sadler's Factory Bill. Report* . . . *Halifax* (Leeds, 1832).
53. Bull, *Appeal* (Bradford, 11 Jan.), 14, *Evils of the Factory System* (19 Jan.), 36.
54. *A Word addressed to the Woolsorters, Combers and Others* . . . (Halifax, 1832), 1, 4.
55. *LM*, 18 Feb.; R. Taylor: *To the Editors of the LM* (Leeds, 24 Feb.).
56. *PMA*, 1 (21 Jan.), *The Times*, 13, *MH*, 4, 15 Feb., etc.; *The Yorkshire Miscellany*, 2 (14 Jan.), 13 (quoted), 21, 28 Jan.; *UPCI* first appeared on 14 Jan.
57. *The Examiner*, 29 Jan., 26 Feb.; see I. Pinchbeck: *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (1930), 199-200.
58. Nicholson, 21; Ross, 10; cf. W. Fitz-John: 1829, or the *Present Times* (Huddersfield, 1832); R. Dibb: *The Factory Girl* (n.p., 1831); R. Oastler (?): *The Factory Child* (n.p., 1831); A. Strickland: *The Factory Child's Lament* (1831); W. Walker: *Poetical Strictures on the Factory System* (Leeds, 1832); W. Taylor: *The White Slave's Complaint* (Stockport, n.d.); A. Wildman: *The Factory Child's Complaint* (n.p., 1831); R. Holder: *Lines for Factory Children* (n.p., n.d.); *The Factory Child* (1831, 1832), *Factory Child's Lament* (n.p., 1831), *Factory Child's Hymn* (Leeds, 1832), *A Piecer's Tale* (n.p., 1832), *Lines written on seeing a number of Factory Children* (n.p., 1832), *Hymns for Factory Children* (Leeds, 1831), *The Song of the Factory Children* (Leeds, 1832).
59. Poster, 7 Feb. Oastler described the Yorkshire organisation in *PMA*, 10 (24 Mar.).
60. Leeds circular. On Hall, see Taylor, 466-71, on Osburn, *LM*, 27 Feb. 1875.
61. *MSA*, 25 Feb., 10, 17, 31 Mar., *MG*, 10, 24 Mar., on STCs, etc., Doherty in *PMA*, 10.
62. Oastler to J. Clarke, 5 Mar. (*PMA*, 8: 10 Mar.).
63. *DA*, 29 Sept., 27 Oct. 1831, 26 Jan. 1832; *PP*, 1831-2, XV, 358-60, 380-1; *Reasons for a Legislative Measure . . . to Limit and Regulate the Hours . . . in Flax-Spinning Mills* (Dundee, 1832). On Galletly, see W. Norrie: *Dundee Celebrities* (Dundee, 1873), 61-3.
64. *DA*, 6 Oct. 1831, 23 Feb. 1832.
65. *PP*, 1831-2, XV, 235-67; *PMA*, 3 (4 Feb.).
66. *A7*, 22 Feb., 7 Mar. On Kidd and Gordon, see H. Scott: *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ* (Edinburgh, 1926), VI, 7, 9, and on Gordon, W. Ewing: *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1914), I, 171.
67. *PP*, 1831-2, XV, 214-21.
68. *DA*, 27 Oct., 10, 17 Nov. 1831, 9 Feb., 8 Mar. 1832; *GC*, 10 Mar.
69. *PMA*, 8, 10 (31 Mar., 14 Apr.); *UPCI*, 14, 28 Apr.
70. H. Hoole: *A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord Althorp* . . . (Manchester, 12 Mar.).

71. *A Letter to Sir J. C. Hobhouse on the Factories Bill* (1832), 6, 14, 16, 18, 35, 38, 42, etc.
 72. *Mr. Sadler, his Time Bill and his Party* (1832), *passim*.

CHAPTER THREE

1. 'Alfred', I, 321.
2. *The Times*, 2, LI, 8, *UPCI*, 10 Mar.
3. *MSA*, 10 Mar.
4. Oastler to chairman of Manchester meeting, 13 Mar. (*PMA*, 24 Mar., and *The Factory System*, Bolton, 1832). Livesey argued that if weavers reduced work by one-sixth and demand remained stable, 'the effect would be an *advance* of wages' (*Moral Reformer*, 1 Mar. 1833).
5. R. Oastler: *Speech . . . Bradford . . . 14 Jan. 1833* (Leeds, 1833), 2. Despite Oastler's constant attacks, some writers ascribe his and Sadler's policy to Methodism (see H. U. Faulkner: *Chartism and the Churches* (New York, 1916), 93-4; E. R. Taylor: *Methodism and Politics* (Cambridge, 1935), 94-5; Warner, 133; R. F. Wearmouth: *Some Working Class Movements . . .* (1948), 178; R. G. Cowherd: *The Politics of English Dissent* (1959), 101, 142, etc.). But W. H. B. Court: *Concise Economic History of Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1954), 238, adopts the old accusation that Oastler was a 'High Churchman', while Speake and Whitty, 90, 141, refer to him as a Moravian. Oastler described himself as 'not a Latitudinarian . . . Puseyite . . . of the Low Church (or) High Church, (but) a sincere member of the established, reformed, Protestant, national episcopal Church' (*The Home*, I, 1, 3 May 1851).
6. Bolton STC letter, 20 Mar. (*PMA*, 31 Mar.).
7. *DA*, 23 Feb., 22 Mar.; *PMA*, 31 Mar.
8. *UPCI*, 10, 31 Mar.
9. *ER*, L, 100 (Jan. 1830), 528-65.
10. Macaulay to Taylor, 16 Mar. ('Alfred', I, 148-50).
11. *Hansard*, XI, 340 *seq.*; *The Times*, MC, 17, LI, 22 Mar.; 'Alfred', I, 151-209; *Memoirs*, 337-79; Grant, 30-2; C. Wing: *Evils of the Factory System* (1837), 256-85; Leeds broadside. Bill in *PP*, 1831-2, II, 1.
12. *The Times*, 13 Feb.; *DA*, 22 Mar.; Oastler evidence, 7 July (*PP*, 1831-2, XV, 454-63).
13. *UPCI*, 7 Apr.; *cf. Blackwood's Mag.*, XXXIII, 206 (Apr. 1833), 423.
14. Circulars in LUL; posters, Holmfirth, 22, Huddersfield, 24 Mar., Bradford, 2 Apr.; the memorandum is reprinted in Driver, 550-3.
15. *PP*, 1831-2, XV: 'Report from the Committee on the Bill to regulate the Labour of Children in the Mills and Factories of the United Kingdom', 157-64, 112-14, 195-9, 192-5, 229-31, 17-26; 413-27, 479-96, 214-26, 364-8, 598-603, 555-64, 571-6, 564-8, 299-307, 496-511, 512-18, 518-24, 524-34; 114-22, 153-7, 251-67, 283-94, 294-9, 307-23, 323-38, 469-70, 398-406, 439-48; 463-9. Other medical witnesses included Thomas Hodgkin, Sir George Tuthill, Sir Charles Bell, G. J. Guthrie, Peter Roget and James Blundell. Their evidence was reprinted in *A Brief View of Medical Evidence and Opinion* (Bradford, 1832) and several times later.

16. *Exposition of the Factory System* (Manchester, Mar. 1832), 5, 13, 15.
17. J. Birley: *Sadler's Bill, Cotton Branch* (Manchester, 6 Apr. 1832), 6, 7, 8.
18. A. Whitehead poster, 25 Jan. 1833; G. W. Addison in *LM*, 26 Jan. 1833; replies in *BLP*, 8 Feb. 1833, etc.; *DA*, 15 Feb. 1833. Gaskell and Engels both attacked the *Report*; Hutt, *art. cit.*, in Hayek, 162, attacked Sadler for 'immediately' publishing the evidence.
19. *The Times*, *MH*, 2, *MC*, 5, *PMA*, *MG*, 7 Apr.; London leaflets (in *LUL*); Oastler in *FP*, II, 42 (15 Oct. 1842).
20. Osburn to STCs, 17 Apr.; *Slavery in Yorkshire!* (Oastler, 17 Apr.); *LM*, 21 Apr. (Taylor); local posters; *Order of Procession*; *LI*, 26, *LM*, *LP*, 21, 28 Apr., *LI*, 3, 10, *UPCI*, 5, *PMA*, 5, 12, 26 May; *FP*, I, 4, 15 (23 Jan., 10 Apr. 1841); *MC*, 7 Sept. 1833 (Foster); 'Alfred', I, 235-54; Croft, 59-62; Driver, 154-63; J. C. Gill: 'The Pilgrimage of Mercy' (*York Quarterly*, n.s., 7: May 1958). The Rastrick banner is in the Tolson Memorial Museum, Huddersfield.
21. *Justice and Humanity* (Sheffield, 7 May); *AJ*, *passim*; *UPCI*, 28 Apr.
22. *The Factory System, or Frank Hawthorn's Visit . . .* (Leeds, 1831), 4, 12; *Dialogue between Owd Carder Joan . . . an Tum . . .* (Huddersfield, 1832?); *The Day Dream, or a Letter to King Richard* (Leeds, 1832); R. Oastler: *Letter to Mr. H. Hoole* (Manchester, 1832); *PMA*, 2 June; M. T. Sadler: *The Factory Child's Last Day* (1832); cf. an operative's 64-page poem, *A Factory Child* (London, 1832) and 'A Piecer's Tale', in J. H. Turner: *A Yorkshire Anthology* (Bingley, 1901), 227-9.
23. *UPCI*, 28, *PMA*, 14, 21, 28 Apr., etc.; cf. S. Maccoby: *English Radicalism, 1832-1852* (1935), 87-8, who considers that the spinners led the agitation, 'with some assistance' from Sadler.
24. J. P. Kay: *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832), 11, 24. See Engels and *Blackwood's Mag.*, XXXIII, 206 (Apr. 1833), 437, for criticisms. Selections were printed in *UPCI*, 14, 21 Apr. and *Short Time Tracts*, 6 (Nov. 1835).
25. Brown, *op. cit.*; see *PMA*, 9 June, Hutt, 179, n. 50, and A. E. Musson: 'R. Blinco and the Early Factory System' (*Derbyshire Miscellany*, Nov. 1957).
26. *PMG*, 11 Apr.; Place MSS. 27, 791, f. 242.
27. Richardson, *Address*, 7, 9.
28. *LM Extraordinary*, 15, *LI*, 17 May.
29. *LM*, 16, 23, 30, *LI*, 21 June and leaflet; *FP*, III, 13 (1 Apr. 1843); poster, 25 June.
30. *WJ*, *LI*, *passim*; pamphlets, *Entry of J. Wood, Esq. and The Woodites' Forget-me-not*, 8-9; cf. Oastler, *Facts*, 48-9.
31. Mr. Oastler's *Speech on his Return from London* (Leeds, 1832); Oastler in *FP*, I, 4, 5, 7 (23, 30 Jan., 13 Feb. 1841), *Eight Letters to the Duke of Wellington* (1835), 4-7, *The Home*, I, 9 (28 June 1851), III, 74 (25 Sept. 1852), VII, 170 (5 Aug. 1854), VIII, 214 (2 June 1855); also *LI*, 12 July, *PMA*, 28 July.
32. Oastler to Thornhill, 14, Sadler to Oastler, 16, 17 July (*FP*, I, 7: 13 Feb. 1841); *LP*, 23 July; *PMA*, 4 Aug.; Oastler, *Facts*, 47-8.
33. *LM*, 21, Taylor, Hannam, *To the Public*, 31 July.
34. *MG*, *passim*; *Northern Division of Derbyshire* (report, 4 Aug.); *Charge of Bishop of Lichfield* (Aug.), 23 seq.; *To the Electors of*

Stockport (Newton, 5 July); *HG*, 22 Dec.; *MT*, 8 Sept., etc.; *HHE*, 7 July.

35. *Preliminary proceedings relative to the first election for . . . Leeds* (Leeds, 1832), 68-72; *Woodites' forget-me-not*, 10; *LP*, 18 Aug.; *WH?*, 24 Aug.

36. *LI*, 30, *PMA*, 18, 25 Aug.; *MG*, 1 Sept.; *Mr. Sadler and the THB* (Leeds, 1832); *Doherty's Pennyworth of Politics*, 8 Sept.

37. *Operatives of Leeds!* (Oastler, 29 Aug.).

38. Leeds posters (LRL); *LI*, 6, *LM*, 8 Sept.; *Preliminary Proceedings*, 3-24.

39. *PR*, 28 Jan., 24 Nov.; Leeds posters; *LM*, 15 Sept.; leaflet, *Mercurial Felicities*.

40. W. G. Scarth: *To the Electors . . .*, 8 Dec.; cf. *Methodism and Hypocrisy*.

41. *To the Electors*, by 'A Hater . . .'; *Is Leeds to have Christian or Infidel Representatives?*; *Mr. Marshall and Slavery*.

42. *LM*, 27 Oct., etc.; G. S. Bull: *To T. B. Macaulay* (Leeds, 7 Dec.), *Reply to the LM's Remarks* (Leeds, 8 Dec.).

43. *To the Worthy . . . Electors of Leeds*.

44. *Falsehoods . . .*, 8, 22 Sept., 5 Oct.; *Cracker*, 29 Nov.

45. *The Contrast: Cracker*, 8 Dec.

46. *Whig Fraud and English Folly*.

47. *LM*, 22, 29, *LI*, 20 Sept., etc.; Leeds posters.

48. *LM*, 10 Sept. 1831; *The Tables Turned* (Leeds, 1832); *The Cracker Cracked*.

49. *LI*, 13, 20, 27 Sept.; *LM*, *Preliminary Proceedings*, *passim*.

50. *LM*, 27 Oct., 3, 10, 17 Nov.; *LI*, 1, 15 Nov., 6 Dec.; *LT*, 1 Dec.; *LM*, 8 Dec.

51. *A Letter to an Elector of Leeds* (n.p., 1832); *The Tables Turned* (Leeds, 9 Nov.); *A Second Letter . . .* (n.p., 1832), 20.

52. Oastler to Wellington, 24 July, 4 Aug. (*Letters*, 35-54).

53. G. S. Bull: *The Factory System* (Bradford, 3 July), *To the Inhabitants of the Agricultural Districts* (Ipswich, 10 July); *BLP*, 19 Oct., 2 Nov.

54. *BLP*, 16 Nov.; *Memorial to . . . the Archbishop of York, A Capital Dozen, The Boggart* (1 Dec.), Bradford posters.

55. *BLP*, 28 Sept., 2, 16 Nov.; *Letter of T. Bailey, Esq.*, 16 Oct.; *Derby Mercury*, 31 Oct.; *FP*, I, 33 (14 Aug. 1841); C. Richardson: *Factory Slavery* (Nottingham, 1832), 6, *A Short Description of the Factory System* (Bawtry, 1832).

56. *GC*, 29, *Glasgow Chronicle*, 28 Sept., *BLP*, 12 Oct.; *On Abridging the Time of Labour in Factories . . .* (Glasgow, 1833).

57. G. C. Burrows: *A Word to Electors . . .* (Norwich, 20 Nov.), 11, 20.

58. *BLP*, 21 Sept., 5 Oct., 30 Nov.; *A Brief Review of the BLP* (Leeds, 1832), *passim*.

59. *PMA*, 1 Sept., *Pennyworth . . .*, *A Penny Paper* (15 Sept.).

60. *LI*, 20 Sept.; Oastler, *Facts*, 43; cf. Read, *Press*, 95, 181-2.

61. *LI*, 6 Dec.; *The Retort*, 8 Dec.; *Facts*, 13-18.

62. W. Scruton: *Pen and Pencil Pictures of Old Bradford* (Bradford, 1889), 180; *Men of Bradford*, poster; G. S. Bull: *To the Candidates . . .* (Bradford, 11 Dec.), 1.

63. *HHE*, 1 Dec., etc.

64. Driver, 199; Macaulay to Hannah Macaulay, 20 Sept. (G. O. Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1900 ed.), 198); *BLP*, 19 Oct.; *LI*, 6 Dec.

65. *Speech of W. Beckett*; *The Cracker*, 10 Dec.; *LM Extraordinary*, 11 Dec.; E. Parsons: *History of Leeds* (Leeds, 1834), I, 162.

66. *LI*, 13, 20, 27, *LM*, 15, 22, 29, *HHE*, 14 Dec.; Trevelyan, 208-9; Leeds posters in LUL and LRL; *LM*, 18 May 1833; *The Cracker*, 21 Dec.; *Leeds Borough Election Poll* (Leeds, 1833). The best account is A. S. Turberville and F. Beckwith: 'Leeds and Parliamentary Reform, 1820-1832' (*Thoresby Soc. Pub.*, XLI, 1, 1943); see also *The Home*, II, 42-3 (14, 21 Feb. 1852); Baines, *Life*, ch. 12; *Sadler*, 407 seq.; Driver, ch. 17. P. Gregg: *Social and Economic History* (1950), 125, refers to Sadler as M.P. for Leeds before its enfranchisement; Glover, 319, treats the election as occurring in Huddersfield; G. D. H. Cole: *Attempts at General Union* (1953), 76, names Baines and Macaulay as victors.

67. Oastler, *Facts*, *passim*; *HG*, *LM*, 22, *LI*, 27 Dec.; *FP*, I, 1 (1 Jan. 1841).

68. *HHE*, *HG*, *LI*, *LM*, *passim*; *MT*, 15 Dec.; *MG*, 15, 22 Dec.; Sykes, 364-5; R. Oastler: *To the Electors of the North Riding* (York, 1832). Cf. A. Briggs: 'The Background of the Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities' (*CHJ*, X, 3, 1952), 'T. Attwood and the Economic Background of the Birmingham Political Union' (*ib.* IX, 2, 1948); L. S. Marshall: 'The First Parliamentary Election in Manchester' (*AHR*, XLVII, 3, Apr. 1942).

69. Oastler, *Facts*, 3, 21-2.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. W. B. Ferrand: 'Letter to the Duke of Newcastle', 8 Jan. 1852 (*The Home*, II, 48: 27 Mar. 1852). Busfeild was the son of C. F. Busfeild and Sarah Ferrand.

2. *BLP*, 28 Dec. 1832; Williams' circular, 14 Jan. 1833; Downes to Oastler, 22 Jan. (in LUL).

3. *To the Operatives of Leeds and the West Riding*.

4. *LM*, 12, *MC*, 7, *DA*, 11, *AJ*, 23 Jan.

5. Scholes, 521; Redford, *Manchester Merchants*, 80; R. Smith, *art. cit.*; Collier, 119; Holden, 162; cf. Bowley, 111, 117.

6. *On the Factory System* (n.p., 1833), 9.

7. *Remarks on the Propriety and Necessity of making the Factory Bill of more general application* (Mar. 1833); cf. *Globe*, 11 Jan.

8. V. Royle: *The Factory System Defended* . . . (Manchester, Feb. 1833), 5, 11, 22-4, 30.

9. K. Finlay: *Letter to Lord Ashley* (Glasgow, 3 Mar.), 3, 5, 6, 17-19.

10. *The Factory System* (Glasgow, 1833); *Letter to Lord Althorp* (Montrose, 1833), 1-7.

11. *Letter to Hobhouse*, *op. cit.*, 11.

12. Birley, 6; cf. H. Ashworth: *Letter to . . . Lord Ashley* (Manchester, 1833).

13. *Letter to Lord Althorp*, 11; Royle, 37.

14. 'Alfred', II, 16-18 (speech, 23 Feb.).

15. Smith, *art. cit.*; Fong, 33, 57, 82; *Penny Magazine*, I (1832).

16. Southey to Ashley, 13 Jan. (Sir E. Hodder: *Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury*, K.G. (1886), I, 46).

17. *BLP*, 18, *HG*, *LP*, *LM*, 19, *LI*, 21 Jan.; C. Richardson: *The THB will increase wages* . . . (Leeds, 1833); R. Oastler: *Speech*

- . . . 14 Jan. 1833 (Leeds, 1833); *Minutes and Resolutions* (Bradford, 15 Jan.); *Address*, 14 Jan. R. L. Hill: *Toryism and the People* (1929), 126, n., 128, wrongly refers to Bull as the Lancashire secretary.
18. *BLP*, 1, 8 Feb.; *LI*, *passim*.
19. Oastler to Wellington, 28 Jan. (*Letters*, 55-7); *LM*, 26 Jan., 2 Feb.; *BLP*, 1, 8 Feb.
20. Bull in *BLP*, 22 Feb. and *THA*, 12 June 1847; cf. Hodder, I, 147-9; Grant, 35-7; 'Alfred', I, 344-8; J. W. Bready: *Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Economic Progress* (1926), 180-1; J. L. and B. Hammond: *Lord Shaftesbury* (1923), 19-21, who mistakenly include Hindley in the 1833 Parliament; Gill, 81-5.
21. Bull to STCs, 6 Feb. and to factory children, 9 Feb.
22. Ashley memorandum, 1838 (Hodder, II, 148); Ashley to Oastler, 16 Feb.
23. Southey to Ashley, 7 Feb.
24. R. Kenworthy: *To Lord Brougham* . . . (Lees, 1833); Peel to Thomas Raikes, 3 Feb. (*A Portion of the Journal kept by T. Raikes, Esq.* (1856), I, 157).
25. *The Times*, 7, *BLP*, 15, *LP*, 9, *LI*, 23 Feb.
26. Morpeth and Ashley letters, 6 Feb.
27. *BLP*, *LI*, *passim*; G. S. Bull: *Factory Children* (Bradford, 1833); *HG*, 23 Feb.
28. *MSA*, 16 Feb.; *BLP*, 22 Feb., 1 Mar.; *White Slavery* (Norwich poster, 18 Feb.).
29. *DA*, 1, 8 Mar., 22 Feb.; *GC*, 23 Feb., 2 Mar.; *DA*, 12 Apr.; *BLP*, 25 Jan., 19 Apr.
30. Printed report; *BLP*, 1 Mar.; *FP*, I, 9 (27 Feb. 1841); 'Alfred', II, ch. 1; Croft, 93-6.
31. Oastler to *LI*, 5 Mar.; *BLP*, 15 Mar.
32. *BLP*, 15, *MH*, 8 Mar.; posters, Leeds, Bradford (16 Mar.), Otley.
33. *BLP*, *passim*; *HG*, 16, *LI*, 25 Mar.; R. Oastler: *Infant Slavery* (Preston, 1833), 4-7.
34. Newcastle poster, 25 Mar.; *BLP*, 12 Apr.; Wellington to Wildman, 9 Mar.
35. *Ten Hours Bill*, *The Public Set Right*, Manchester posters, 22 Mar., 5 Apr.
36. *BLP*, 22, 29 Mar., 5 Apr.
37. *HG*, 30, *The Moral Reformer*, 1 Mar.
38. *British Mag.*, 1 Mar.; *The Westminster Rev.*, XVII, 36 (Apr. 1833), 380-404.
39. *Fraser's Mag.*, VII, 40 (Apr. 1833), 377-92; *Blackwood's Mag.*, XXXIII, 206 (Apr. 1833); *Figaro in London*, 13 Apr.
40. Gaskell, *Manufacturing Population*; T. S. Ashton, in Hayek, 37, refers to 'the Reverend Philip Gaskell'.
41. R. Bullock: *On Mending the Times* (n.p., 1833), 7.
42. McCulloch to Ashley, 28 Mar. (Hodder, I, 157-8); R. Torrens: *Letters on Commercial Policy* (1833), 73; G. P. Scrope: *Principles of Political Economy* (1833), 51.
43. *LI*, 25 Mar., 6 Apr.; R. Oastler: *Reply to Mr. Gisborne* . . . (Manchester, 1833), *Speech* . . . Manchester, Apr. 27th, 1833 (Manchester, 1833), 14; *BLP*, 5 Apr.
44. *Public Meeting at Bolton* (Bolton, 1833); Clegg, 84.
45. Owen to Morrison, 29 Mar.
46. *PP*, 1833, II, 263.
47. *Hansard*, XVII, 113.

48. *HG*, 13, 27 Apr.; *Report of a Public Meeting . . . Halifax* (Halifax, 1833); *BLP*, *passim*.

49. C. Richardson: *Speech delivered Apr. 19th, 1833 . . .* (Leeds, 1833), 7.

50. One of Brotherton's few supporters was Thomas Pitt of Dukinfield STC, who thought he 'had every chance of obtaining' an Act (*Ashton and Stalybridge Reporter*, 24 July 1858).

51. Minutes; G. S. Bull: *The Duty of the Ministers of the Gospel* (n.p., 1834), 3; R. Oastler: *Speech at Manchester*, *op. cit.*, 5-7; *Instructions to the STCs . . .*

52. *Return to an Address of 20 May*; Mill to Carlyle, 11-12 Apr. (H. S. R. Elliot: *Letters of J. S. Mill* (1910), I, 45). For a minimising view of Benthamite influence, see D. Roberts: 'Jeremy Bentham and the Victorian Administrative State' (*VS*, II, 3: Mar. 1959); cf. O. MacDonagh: 'The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal' (*HJ*, I, 1: Mar. 1958); H. Parris: 'The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal Reappraised' (*Ib.* III, 1: Mar. 1960); and S. E. Finer: *Life and Times of Sir E. Chadwick* (1952), 50-68.

53. *Instructions from the Central Board . . .* (1833), 25, 24 Apr., 1 May; *The Times*, 3 June.

54. *BLP*, 12 Apr.; posters in LUL and BRL; *The Commissioners' Vade-Mecum* (Leeds, 1833), 5.

55. *MH*, 13 Apr.; G. Condy: *An Argument for Placing Factory Children within the Pale of the Law* (1833), *passim*, *Fraser's Mag.*, VII, 42 (June 1833), 707-15.

56. G. Crabtree: *Factory Commission: The Legality . . . questioned . . .* (1833), 5, 10; cf. E. von Plenier: *The English Factory Legislation* (1873), 10.

57. *MSA*, *passim*; *Manchester — The Factory Commission Arrived* (8 May); posters.

58. *DA*, 10, 17 May; *GC*, 1 June.

59. M. T. Sadler: *Protest against the Secret Proceedings . . .* (Leeds, 20 May), 4-6; J. E. Drinkwater and A. Power: *Replies to Mr. M. T. Sadler's Protest* (Leeds, 25 May), 3; W. Rider: *Observations on . . . the Replies* (Leeds, 31 May), 3; M. T. Sadler: *Reply to the Two Letters* (Leeds, 5 June), 6, 16; J. E. Drinkwater: *Letter to M. T. Sadler* (Leeds, 11 June), 10, 11; A. Power: *Letter to M. T. Sadler* (Leeds, 11 June).

60. J. Stubbs, W. Rider: *Don Quixote and his Esquires* (Leeds, 18 June), 8.

61. *Great Meeting in Leeds* (Leeds, 1833); W. Rider: *More Lies of the Mercury* (Leeds, 27 May), *To the Commissioners . . .* (Leeds, 16 May); *R. Oastler's Protest* (Leeds, 24 May), Drinkwater, 25, Oastler, 25 May; *Secret Commission* (Leeds, 22 May); *LI*, 13, 18, 25, *The Times*, 22 May; Leeds posters and leaflets.

62. Doherty, Turner to Central Board, 24 May; G. S. Bull: *The Factory Commission* (Leeds poster, 18 May); *W. Patten's Commission* (Bradford poster); W. Hanna: *Memoirs of . . . T. Chalmers* (Edinburgh, 1849), III, 366.

63. Bradford posters; *VWR*, I, 15, 22, *LI*, I, 8, 15, *PMG*, I June; *The Times*, 10 June; *Protest of the Rev. G. S. Bull*, poster, 4 June; *A Large Meeting of the Children* (n.p., 11 June); J. Hall: *To H.M. King Richard*, poster.

64. Hodder, I, 163; Oastler to Wellington, 7 May (*Letters*, 58-63); *LT*, 16, 23 May.

65. *A Few Arguments in favour of Mr. Sadler's Bill* (Huddersfield, 1833), 6, 14-15.
66. *VWR*, 15 June; G. Condy: *Speech . . . Manchester, May 13, 1833* (n.p., 1833).
67. *LI*, *VWR*, 22, *PMG*, 29 June; R. Oastler: *Speech . . . Huddersfield, June 18, 1833* (Leeds, 1833), 4, 6-8.
68. *Destructive*, 8 June; *England rebuked by Germany*, leaflet.
69. *Hansard*, XVIII, 914; Grant, 55; cf. 'Alfred', II, 58-9.
70. *Resolutions of the Committee of Master Cotton Spinners*, 18 June.
71. *LI*, 29 June; *FP*, I, 34 (21 Aug. 1841).
72. G. S. Bull: *Friends of Humanity*, Bradford poster, 19 June.
73. Bull poster, 20 June; *LM*, 15 June; Stubbs, Rider, *The T.H.B.*, Leeds poster, 18 June. Douglas Jerrold produced a play entitled 'The Factory Child', which failed (G. M. Young: *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (1933), 33); cf. *Ann. Reg.*, 1832, 129-30.
74. *Address of the Delegates . . .*, 24 June.
75. Posters; *The Times*, 28 June.
76. *PP*, 1833, XX, 'First Report from the Commissioners . . .', 6, 48, 35-7. Cf. W. C. Taylor: *Factories and the Factory System* (1844), 28, who alleged that the campaign was 'intended as a blind to the ulterior project of a Ten Hours Bill', with an 'absurd' hope of the same wages.
77. *PP*, 1833, XX, 24, 19, 29, 35, 36, 47, 57, 61, 75, 72.
78. Medical evidence in 'Second Report', 13 July (*PP*, 1833, XXI); see pamphlets, *Extracts from the Medical Evidence* (17 July) and *Medical Opinions*. 'Supplementary Reports' followed later (*PP*, 1834, XIX, XX); *Courier*, 6 July.
79. *LT*, 4, *MH*, *MP*, 1, *The Times*, 2, 3, *True Sun*, 2, *Courier*, 2, *Guardian*, 3, *Standard*, 5, *A7*, 17 July.
80. Oastler to Foster, 23 June (in *LUL*).
81. *LT*, 4, *LI*, 6, *VWR*, 6, 13, *The Times*, 5 July; pamphlets, *Great Meeting of the WR* and *The Great WR Meeting* (Leeds, 1833); *STC* report in *LUL*; *WMF*, 13 July. *The Times* and *LT* agreed on 100,000 people; Wood thought 120,000 ('Alfred', II, 60); Croft, 89, gives 80,000-120,000, Cole (*General Union*, 80), 120,000.
82. *Hansard*, XIX, 220-54.
83. The Webbs, 132, n. 2, date the *VWR* only June and July; it actually lasted until the following spring.
84. *Public Meeting at Halifax*, report; *VWR*, 20 July.
85. *Hansard*, XIX, 883 seq.; Ashley to Oastler, 19 July.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. G. Crabtree: *A Brief Description of a Tour through Calder Dale* (Huddersfield, 1833), 22.
2. *An Appeal to the Public* (Todmorden poster, 9 July); *To the Factory Masters* (Oastler poster, 15 July); *Reply to R. Oastler* (Todmorden, 22 July); *VWR*, 20 July.
3. *To the Nameless Factory Masters* (Woodhall poster, 2 Aug.).
4. *LM*, 29 July; Foster to *LM*, 13 July; *MC*, 7 Sept.; *PMG*, 6 July, 7 Sept., etc.
5. Stuart to Wilson, 29, 31 July, 2, 3 Aug.; Wilson replies, 30 July, 1, 2, 3 Aug.; *Courier*, 5 Aug.
6. Reprinted in *LI*, 20 July, etc.

7. Oastler to Potter, 15 July (*VWR*, 20 July), to Wildman, 25 July (*KN*, 9 Apr. 1870).
8. Lord Ashley's *THB* and the Scheme of the Factory Commissioners compared (1833), 12.
9. H. Whiteley: *Three Months in Jamaica* (1833), 22; R. Cruikshank: *The Condition of the West Indies Slave contrasted with that of the Infant Slave* . . . (1833).
10. Oastler to *LI*, 29 July; Bradford poster in *LUL*.
11. *The Proceedings of a Public Meeting* (Bradford, 1833), 4, 7, 9, 15, 17.
12. *AJ*, 7 Aug.; *Liberator*, *GC*, 3 Aug.; *Report of a Most Important Meeting* (Bradford, 1833), 3, 8.
13. *LI*, 3 Aug.
14. *PF*, 1833, II, 281; *Hansard*, XX, 449 seq., 528, 577; 3 and 4 Will. IV, c. 103.
15. L. Horner: *The Factories Regulation Act Explained* (Glasgow, 1834), 21.
16. J. Wood: *The Right of Labour to Legislative Protection* (1832), 10.
17. 'Alfred', II, 63; Hodder, I, 167; R. Oastler: *The Rejected Letter* (Leeds, 1836), 13.
18. *PMG*, 5 Oct.; *LI*, 10 Aug., 28 Sept.; *LM*, 10 Aug.; posters.
19. Southey to Ashley, 24 July (Hodder, I, 168-9).
20. Posters, 22 Aug.; *Proceedings of a Public Meeting* . . . (Huddersfield, 1833), *passim*.
21. *VWR*, 3, 10 Aug.; Cobbett to Hobson, 24 Aug. (Tolson Mem. Museum).
22. *MC*, 7, 9, 16, 25, 27 Sept., 2, 3, 11, 22 Oct.; *PMG*, 6 July, 7, 28 Sept., 12 Oct., 2 Nov.; *VWR*, 21 Sept., 19 Oct.; *LI*, 14, 21, 28 Sept., 12 Oct.; *LT*, 19 Oct.
23. *WMF*, 27 July; *Address*, 7 Aug.
24. *Minutes and Resolutions*; *Address*, 6, 21.
25. Oastler circular, 19, *LI*, 4 Nov.
26. *PMG*, 23 Nov.; *VWR*, 19 Oct.; *The Crisis*, 14, *LI*, 21, *MC*, 17, 25 Dec.
27. Tufnell, *UTCJ*, *UPCI*, *PMA*, *VP*, *Expositor*, *passim*.
28. *The Crisis*, 12, 19 Oct.; Sykes, 320, Croft, 49; Owen to Morrison, n.d.; *PMG*, 28 Sept., 19 Oct.; *Pioneer*, 12, 26 Oct.; *PMG*, 12 Oct., etc.
29. *Catechism of the NRS*, *Rights of Industry*, *Resolutions of the NRS*, *Foundation Axioms of the NRS* (pamphlets); *The Crisis*, 14, *Pioneer*, 7, 21, Cobbett's *PR*, 7, 14, 21, *MC*, 7, 8, 11, 18, *VWR*, 6, *PMG*, 28 Dec.; Oastler qu. Driver, 265-6.
30. Holt to Fielden, 16, Fitton to Fielden, 11 Dec. and reply (*National Regeneration* (1834), 3-21, 31-3); Fielden to Cobbett, 16 Nov., Cobbett reply, 11 Dec. (Cobbett's *PR*, 14 Dec., *Pioneer*, 21 Dec.); Bateson, 105; posters.
31. *Hansard*, XX, 585-6; *London and Westminster Rev.*, XXVI, 1 (Oct. 1836); A. H. Robson: *The Education of Children engaged in Industry*, 1833-76 (1931); G. Ward: 'Education of Factory Child Workers, 1833-50' (*EH*, III, 10, 1935); W. C. R. Hicks: 'Education of the Half-Timer' (*ib.* IV, 14, 1939).
32. *LM*, 2 Nov.; *The March of Humanity and Knowledge*, Bradford poster.
33. T. S. Ashton: *Economic and Social Investigations in Manchester, 1833-1933* (Manchester, 1934), 17-18.

34. Oastler to Wellington, 21 Nov. (*Letters*, 64-87).
35. *VWR*, *LI*, 14, 21, 28 Dec.; posters; this account is largely based on Oastler's 56-page pamphlet, *The Pearking* (Huddersfield, 1834).
36. *To the Electors*, Bull, 30, Oastler, 27 Jan.; *Cracker*, 11 Feb.; W. Rider: *To the Operatives*, 1 Feb.; *LI*, 15, 22, *VWR*, 22 Feb.; Baines, *Life*, ch. 13; Rayner, 120; on Hall and Habergam, see *WPG*, 27 June 1835.
37. *HRI*, 8, 22 Feb.; *MC*, 23 Jan.
38. *Pioneer*, 1, *BO*, 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar.; G. S. Bull: *The Late Meeting at Bradford*, 13 Mar. and *To the Friends of the NRS*; Bussey to *LT*, 20 Mar.; *Pioneer*, 24, *VWR*, 8 Mar., *HRI*, 22 Mar., 19 Apr.
39. *HRI*, 12, 19, *VWR*, 19 Apr.; *Pioneer*, 22 Feb., 1, 8 Mar.; *Pioneer*, *LT*, 29 Mar.; *The Times*, 21 Mar.
40. *HRI*, 22, 29, *The Times*, 17, *Pioneer*, 19 Mar.; *WDJ*, 6 June; *The Quinquarticular System of Organisation* (Manchester, 1834), 2; *LM*, 10 May; *Pioneer*, *LM*, 14 June.
41. *To the Unions of Great Britain and Ireland*, 20 Aug.
42. *VWR*, 14 Dec. 1833, 15 Feb., 29 Mar., 19 Apr., 24, 31 May, 6 June 1834; Oastler, *The Pearking*, 38, 52; J. Wood: *Intercepted Letter of an Archbishop of the Church by Law Established* (Wakefield, 1834); R. Oastler: *Papal Bull from Pope Gregory XVI to King Joseph, the Deluder* (Huddersfield, 4 Mar.), 25.
43. J. Wood: *Intercepted Mandate* . . . (Huddersfield, 1834); R. Oastler: *A Penny Bellowing and Goring* (Huddersfield, 15 May), 1, 6-8, *A Twopenny Extreme Unction* (Huddersfield, 31 May), 4, 12.
44. R. Oastler: *Three Hundred to One* (Huddersfield, 1834); *VWR*, 5 Apr.
45. Oastler to Wellington, 17 Mar. (*Letters*, 88-90); posters; *Report* . . . (Huddersfield, 1834).
46. *LM*, 12, 19, 26, *PMG*, 19 Apr.; *Pioneer*, 10 May; *The Sighing of the Prisoner* (Rider).
47. R. Oastler: *A Few Words to the Friends and Enemies of Trades Unions* (Huddersfield, 17 May), 4, 5, 8, *A Serious Address to the Mill-owners* . . . (Huddersfield, 10 June), 1-4, 6, 8; cf. *PMG*, 11 July, 1835.
48. G. S. Bull: *The Entire Demolition of Trades Unions by the recent Discharge of an old rusty Parchment Blunderbuss* (n.p., 1 May), 9, 14.
49. Southey to Ashley, 12 May (Hodder, I, 195-6).
50. J. L. and B. Hammond: *The Village Labourer* (1948 ed.), II, III, n. 1.
51. *PP*, 1834, XXVII; appendices in *ib.* XXVIII-XXXIX.
52. J. W. Croker: *Correspondence and Diaries* (ed. L. J. Jennings, 1884), II, 337.
53. 4 and 5 Will. IV, c. 1.
54. J. Walter: *A Letter to the Electors of Berkshire* . . . (26 Apr.), 23.
55. *Cobbett's PR*, 3 May, 16 Aug.
56. *FP*, I, 16 (17 Apr. 1841); *A and D*, 8 Aug.; *The Home*, VI, 158 (6 May 1854), etc.
57. Ashworth, 9 June (*PP*, 1835, XXXV, 1st Rep. of P.L. Commissioners, 212-13); Greg, 17 Sept. (*ib.*); *FP*, I, 14 (3 Apr. 1841); cf. Redford, *Labour Migration*, 91.
58. *PMG*, 5 July; Oastler to Wellington, 5 July (*Letters*, 91-108).
59. F. H. Maberley: *To the Poor and their Friends* (1836), 8.

60. *FP*, I, 26 (26 June 1841); *The Home*, VII, 172 (12 Aug. 1854).
61. Marwick, 144; Johnston, 315-16; Ashton, *Manchester*, 21; *A Letter . . . on the distresses of the HLWs* (Bolton, 1834), 3 seq.; *PP*, 1834, X, Rep. of HLWs Committee, 278 seq.; cf. *PR*, 12 Sept., *The Times*, 2 Nov., for arguments on Oastler's evidence.
62. *The Demagogue*, 28 June, 5 July; *PMG*, 5, 12, 19 July.
63. *BO*, 31 July, 7 Aug., 11 Sept.; G. S. Bull: *Letter to the Rev. T. R. Taylor . . .* (Bradford, 28 Aug.), *Another Rev. Friend for the Poor Curate of Byerley* (12 Sept.), *To the Public* (23 Sept.), *Examples of Prayer* (20 Sept.), *The Duty of Ministers* (18 Oct.), *Letter to R. Rickards*, 4; *MSA*, 29 Nov.; Bradford pamphlets.
64. G. S. Bull: *The Church her own Enemy* (Wakefield, 24 June), *Sins of the Poor and Great . . .* (Huddersfield), *Lecture to Benefit or Relief Societies* (Bradford), *To the Coal Miners* and *The Gospel of Christ recommended to Coal Miners* (Bradford), *Lecture upon the NPL* (Bradford, and *BO*, 1 Jan. 1835), *The NPL Act* (n.p.), *Substance of a Lecture upon the NPL* (Bradford), *To the People of Bradford* (23 Dec.), *The NPL. To the Inhabitants of Bradford* (28 Nov.); posters.
65. R. Oastler: *Mr. Bull and Mr. Winterbottom*, poster, 17 Oct.; *BO*, 17 July; *Letter . . .* (Bradford, 26 July), *passim*.
66. *A and D*, 2, 9, 16 Aug.; R. Oastler: *Letter on the Validity of Sir J. Ramsden's Title . . .* (Huddersfield, 8 Aug.).
67. Oastler, *Letters*, 122-74 (8 Oct.), to Wellington, 19 Nov. (*ib.* 109-18).
68. Horner succeeded one Musgrave in the autumn of 1834.
69. Horner's report, 4 Dec., Rickards, 24 Dec., Howell, 20 Dec., Saunders, 28 Dec. 1833, Rickards, 15 Apr. 1834 (*PP*, 1834, XLIII, 424, 446, 442, 482, 458) on education; *LM*, 9 Aug. 1834; Horner to Mary Horner, 29 Nov. 1833 (K. M. Lyell: *Memoir of L. Horner* (1890), I, 287); Rickards' report, 10 Feb. 1834 (*PP*, 1834, XLIII, 449); Inspectors' report, 28 July 1834 (*ib.* 492); cf. *Finer*, 67.
70. Horner's report, 31 Oct. 1848 (*PP*, 1849, XXII, 230).
71. *LM*, 25 Oct.; Oastler to *LI*, 31 Oct.; *LI*, 8 Nov.; *LM*, 22 Nov.; *Christmas Pie*, Bradford, 26 Nov.
72. *PP*, 1834, XIX, 195 seq.; Tufnell, 28.
73. T. H. Duncombe: *Life and Correspondence of T. S. Duncombe* (1868), I, 194.
74. *LT*, 20 Dec.; J. Lupton: *Observations on the PLs* (1834); *Most Blessed Amendment . . .* (Leeds, 1834).
75. *PL Starvation Bill* (Norwich, 1834); *PL Bill . . . Dialogue* (Cambridge, 1834).
76. Bradford posters; H. Martineau: *PLs and Paupers* (1834).
77. See G. J. Holyoake: *Life of J. R. Stephens* (1881), and my article, 'Revolutionary Tory: The Life of J. R. Stephens' (*Trans. Lancs. and Cheshire Antiq. Soc.*, LXVIII, 1958), for detailed references.
78. *Great Meeting at Manchester*, 28 Nov.; *Poking Extraordinary*, poster.
79. Ashley's diary, 12 July (Hodder, I, 199); Oastler to Wellington, 19 Nov. (*Letters*, 109-18); Cobbett to Peel, in *PR*, 27 Dec.
80. Preston *Address*, 19 Dec.; posters.
81. Posters in BRL; Scruton, 182-3.
82. Posters in LRL; *LI*, 10, *The Times*, 12 Jan. 1835; C. Grosvenor and Lord Stuart of Wortley: *The First Lady Wharnccliffe and her Family* (1927), II, 229-31.
83. R. Oastler on the NPL (Bradford, 6 Jan.), 4; *Letters*, 20 Jan., 34, 12, 17, 31.

84. Grant to Ashley, 5 Feb. (*MSA*, 14 Mar.); *Protest of the Bradford STC* (19 Feb.).
85. H. Ashworth to Chadwick, 13 Feb.
86. *LM*, 7 Mar.; *Insolent Stupidity corrected by Common Sense*, 12 Mar.
87. *LI*, *passim*; *Liberal Principles!*, Bull notice.
88. *York Courant*, 26 Mar.; report, *The Factory Children and Home Slavery*.
89. *MSA*, 14 Mar.; reports, *The Factory Question*, *Report of Proceedings* . . . Oldham, 5, 16, 18.
90. Oastler to Ashley, 17 Apr. (Hodder, I, 214-16).

CHAPTER SIX

1. *Resolutions of a Meeting* . . . Bradford (21 Mar.); petition, 6 Apr.
2. Scrope to Dewhirst, 25 Apr., reply, 11 May, Scrope and Dewhirst letters, May (*Political Economy versus the Handloom Weavers*, two pamphlets, Bradford, 1835); *PMG*, 1, 8, 15 Aug., *WPG*, 11 July; cf. J. Maxwell: *Manual Labour versus Machinery* (1834).
3. G. S. Bull: *The Cause of Industry* (Bradford, 24 Apr.), 3.
4. *LM*, 9, *LT*, 11 May; G. S. Bull: *Morpeth, the Friend of the Oppressed!!* (Leeds, 9 May), 3.
5. *LT*, 4 May; R. Oastler: *Slavery in Yorkshire* (Leeds, 21 Apr.), 2, 3, 8.
6. R. Oastler: *Yorkshire Slavery. The 'Devil-to-do' amongst the Dissenters in Huddersfield* (Leeds, 1 June), 5-7, 8.
7. R. Oastler: *The Huddersfield Dissenters in a Fury* (Leeds, 18 June), 4, 7, 8, 10-12.
8. R. Oastler: *The Huddersfield Dissenters Stark, Staring Mad!!!* (Leeds, 6 July), 3, 8.
9. *MSA*, *BC*, 16 May; *THB* — *Meeting at Chorley* (report).
10. Oastler, *Devil-to-do*, 7-8; *WPG*, 18 July.
11. Preston Address, 23 Aug.; *WPG*, 26 Sept., *NMW*, 2 Oct.; von Plener, 19.
12. *PR*, 13, 20, 27 June, *WPG*, 11 July; *Belfast Guardian*, 8 Aug.; *Fraser's Mag.*, XII, 69 (Sept. 1835); *Annual Biography and Obituary*, XX (1836), 182-8.
13. J. M. Cobbett: *To the Electors of Oldham*, 26 June.
14. 'Alfred', II, 85. Oastler's 18 'Letters to Mr. Cleave' appeared in the *WPG* between 20 June 1835 and 2 Apr. 1836.
15. *WPG*, 20 June, 4 July.
16. *Ib.* 18, 25 July, 26 Sept.
17. *PMG*, 15, 29 Aug.
18. *TD*, 3, 17, 24, 31 Oct., 7 Nov.
19. *WPG*, 10, 17, 31 Oct., 7, 14, 21, 28 Nov., 12 Dec.
20. *TD*, 14, 21 Nov.
21. *PMG*, 1, 15 Aug., *WPG*, 12, 19 Sept.
22. Place to Turner, 29 Sept. (in Roebuck's *Pamphlets for the People*, I, 16, and *WPG*, 5 Dec.).
23. Turner to Place, 28 Oct. (*MSA*, *WPG*, 5 Dec.); Place, 17 Nov. (*Pamphlets*, II, 6).
24. Place to M. H. Sadler, 31 Oct.; Place *MSS.* 27, 791, f. 271.

25. W. Paul: *History of the Origin and Progress of the Operative Conservative Societies* (Doncaster, 1842 ed.), 8-9; *Rules of Leeds O.C.S.*; *LI*, *LT*, 28 Nov.; *Blackburn Standard*, 2 Dec.
26. *LI*, 5 Dec.; *Dinner to J. Hardy, Esq., M.P.* (report).
27. Paul, Hill, *The Times*, *passim*. G. D. H. Cole: *A Century of Co-operation* (Manchester, 1945), 73, strangely commented (of the 1840's) that 'it is doubtful if such a creature as a 'Conservative working man' had ever been thought of. The Tory Party had made no effort then to organise itself on a popular basis'.
28. Address, 17 Oct.; *WPG*, 7 Nov.; Place, 17 Nov. (*Pamphlets*, II, 6); *MSA*, 24 Oct.
29. *WPG*, 1 Aug., 28 Nov., *LT*, 10 Oct.
30. Grant, 58; joint Report, 28 July 1834 (*PP*, 1834, XLIII, 492), Rickards, 15 Apr. 1834 (*ib.* 458), Saunders, 5 Feb. 1835 (*PP*, 1835, XL, 691), Rickards, Aug. 1835 (*PP*, 1836, XLV, 163).
31. *Short-Time Tracts*, nos. 1-6; *MSA*, 5, 12, 20, 28 Dec.; *The THB* (report); Fielden, *Curse*, 39-40; Grant, 59-61; 'Alfred', II, 86.
32. *PMG*, 17 Oct.; Langston report, 17 Oct.
33. *Report . . . on . . . the Manufacturing Districts* (Buckingham, Dec.), 4, 5, 11.
34. *PP*, 1835, XXXV. According to the Commissioners, 1, 785 migrants moved to Lancashire and 1, 256 to Yorkshire, in 1835-37 (*Accounts and Papers*, 1843, XVI, 254), but few records were kept, as Ferrand alleged in the 1840's. Cf. Redford, *Migration*, 92 *seq.*; *PP*, 1837, XXXI.
35. Foster, 30; *TD*, 5, 26 Dec. 1835, 16 Jan. 1836.
36. J. Bowen: *Refutation of some of the charges preferred against the Poor* (1837), 111.
37. A. Ure: *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835), 290-1, 360, 405 *seq.*
38. Baines, *History*, 434, 456, 453, 435, 480, 446.
39. Sir G. Head: *A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts* (1836), 146-7, 169, 187.
40. Horner, Feb. 1836 (*PP*, 1836, XLV, 167), Rickards, *PP*, 1835, XL, 698.
41. *MSA*, 9 Jan. 1836; 'Alfred', II, 87-8; Grant, 61.
42. *MSA*, 23 Jan., 13, 27 Feb., 5 Mar.; 'Alfred', II, 88-90.
43. R. Oastler: *Letter to the Archbishop of York* (Huddersfield, 11 Jan.), 6, 11-12, 15, 16, 28; *TD*, 9 Jan.
44. Baines, *Life*, 221; R. Oastler: *To the Factory Operatives*, 30 Jan.; *WPG*, 20 Feb.
45. R. Oastler, G. S. Bull: *Faithful Advice and Warning*, 2 Feb.; *LI*, 6, *MSA*, 13, *LT*, 27 Feb.
46. Hindley to E. Nuttall (*MSA*, 27 Feb.).
47. *LI*, 5 Mar.; Sir H. F. C. Doyle: *Reminiscences and Opinions, 1813-1885* (1886), 190 *seq.* (qu. Driver, 318-19).
48. *Public Meeting at Bradford* (report).
49. *Return to Address . . . 4 Feb.* 1836; cf. *MP*, 19 Mar.
50. Memorial, 25, Fielden, 29 Feb. (*Curse*, 1-3).
51. Gaskell, *Artisans*, ix, 45, 61, 66-7, 168, 172; Baines, *History*, 479.
52. Fielden, *Curse*, iv, 17-18, 25, 35, 47, 61, 49.
53. *TD*, 6, 13, *WPG*, 20 Feb., 5 Mar., *LT*, 16, 30 Apr.
54. *TD*, 6 Feb.; *WPG*, 19 Mar., 2 Apr., etc.
55. *Hansard*, XXXII, 273.

56. *PP*, 1835, II, 781.
57. Report, 8 Mar., and Address; Earl Howe to Bull, 17 Mar.
58. *BO*, 24, *LI*, 26 Mar.; report.
59. Petitions, etc., in LUL, BRL and Manchester Library.
60. *MSA*, *LM*, *HG*, 26 Mar.; *HG*, 2 Apr.; report. Hill was a former Barnsley weaver.
61. *LI*, *LT*, 2, 9, *WPG*, 16 Apr.; G. S. Bull: *The Factory Question*, 8 Apr.
62. Dewsbury report; *HG*, *WPG*, 16, *BO*, 28, *LT*, 30 Apr., *LT*, 14 May.
63. *The Factory Bill* (Pudsey, 9 Apr.). The paper was later used by other STCs.
64. *WPG*, *PC*, *BC*, *MSA*, 16 Apr.
65. *Liberator*, 7 May; *GC*, 29, *The Constitutional*, 26 Mar.; *DA*, 20 May.
66. *LI*, 26 Mar., *MH*, 18 Mar., 5 Apr., *Standard*, 8 Apr., 10 May, *MP*, 13 Apr., *Christian Advocate*, 28 Mar., 18, 25 Apr., 2 May.
67. *LM*, 26 Mar.; J. Hall paper, 27 Mar.; Oastler to Baines, 29 Mar.; R. Oastler: *More Work for the Leeds New Thief-Catchers* (Huddersfield, 30 Mar.), 3, 4, 5-7, 8, *A Letter to a Runaway M.P.* (Huddersfield, 12 Apr.), 3, 5, 6, 7.
68. M. T. Sadler: *Factory Statistics* (1836), 70.
69. Ure to Hindley, 10 Mar. (*Foreign Competition and the THB* (Bradford, 1836), 1-2); Bull to Hindley, 13 Apr.; *MSA*, 30 Apr.
70. *HG*, 9, 23, 30 Apr., *HHE*, 5, *HG*, 7, *LI*, 21 May; Gill, 152-3, 183, 190.
71. *MSA*, 19 Mar.
72. Grant, 61-2; *Factory Question*, circular, 15 Mar.; *WPG*, 2 Apr.
73. Greville, *Memoirs*, 12 Feb.; Mr. J. P. Cobbett's *Petition* (5 Apr.), 3-5, 11-16.
74. Sir J. C. Hobhouse (Lord Broughton): *Recollections of a Long Life* (ed. Lady Dorchester, 1911), V, 53; cf. *A Statement from the Master Cotton Spinners* (1836).
75. *Hansard*, XXXIII, 737 seq.; pamphlets, *Speeches of the Leading Friends of the Factory Children* (1836), *Speeches of J. Fielden and J. Brotherton* (Manchester, 1836); *MSA*, 14 May. Peel's speech was ambiguous; see G. S. R. Kitson Clark: *Peel and the Conservative Party* (1929), 384-5, and Miss A. A. W. Ramsay: *Sir R. Peel* (1928), 303, for different assessments.
76. Broughton, V, 53.
77. *Hansard*, XXXIV, 306.
78. *LT*, 14, 21, 28 May.
79. *Speeches*, op. cit., 19-20.
80. *Ibid.* 19; *Blackwood's Mag.*, XL, 249 (July 1836), 116; *TD*, 9 July; pamphlet, *Factory Question. The Sayings and Doings of D. O'Connell, Esq.* (1836).
81. *FP*, I, 9, 25 (27 Feb., 19 June 1841).
82. *The Times*, 11 May. R. H. Greg: *The Factory Question* (1837), 13, claimed that 'the merits of the case lost all chance of a fair hearing, from the determination of Lord Ashley and the Tories to throw the Ministers into a minority'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. *BO*, 26, *LT*, 28 May.
2. *Hansard*, XXXIV, 489 *seq.*; *Daily Sun*, 24 June; *MSA*, 9 July. Croft, 108, confuses Hindley's and Thomson's Bills.
3. *On the Factory Question* (Ashton, 27 June), 1-2.
4. Doherty, *Address of the United Degelates*, 6, 8.
5. *Blackwood's Mag.*, XL, 249 (July 1836), 116.
6. Maberley, 3, 8, 44; Russell to Maberley, 17 June.
7. *The Times*, 20 June, 8, 24, 31 Aug., 2, 20 Sept., etc.
8. *HG*, 30 July, etc.; R. Oastler: *The Rejected Letter* (Leeds, 1836), *passim*.
9. R. Oastler: *A Letter to those Millowners who continue to oppose the THB . . .* (Manchester, 5 Aug.), 3, 12, 13, 16.
10. R. Oastler: *The Factory Question and the Factory Agitation calmly considered* (2 Sept.), 5, 7.
11. *MSA*, 27 Aug.
12. *MG*, 24, 28 Sept., 1, 5 Oct.; R. Oastler: *The Law or the Needle* (15 Nov.), 7, 9-26, 30-1; *FP*, II, 39 (24 Sept. 1842).
13. Oastler, *The Law or the Needle*, 36; Croft, 101.
14. 'Alfred', II, 122; Select Committee, 1840, 6th Report, 11.
15. *Misrepresentations Exposed* (Manchester, 1838), 20-1; Hodder, I, 219.
16. *BO*, 10 Nov.; *PP*, 1837, XXXI, 123-5; Horner, 18 Jan. 1837 (*ib.* 100).
17. Hobson had moved to Leeds in 1834 and was imprisoned in 1835 and 1836.
18. R. Oastler: *The Unjust Judge* (Leeds, 11 Sept.), 5, 7-12.
19. Horner, 18 Jan. 1837 (*PP*, 1837, XXXI, 100).
20. See my article, 'M. Balme, Factory Reformer' (*Bradford Antiquary*, Pt. XL, 1960).
21. Lyell, I, 329.
22. White, I, 399; Rayner, 231; Cudworth, *Bradford*, 147, *Manningham*, 114-15; Trevelyan, *Bright*, 32; Bretton, 68; Fletcher, 142, 145; White, I, 352, 437.
23. *Support the Law against the Lawbreakers* (Bradford, 21 Oct.).
24. *The London and Westminster Rev.*, IV, 1 (Oct. 1836), 174-215.
25. *The Lancet*, 22 Oct., 24 Dec.
26. Muggeridge to Tufnell, 3 Nov.; Tufnell circular, 6 Dec.; *cf.* *LM*, 10 Dec.
27. Gaskell, *Artisans*, 172.
28. Maberley, 6.
29. *A Report . . . of a Public Meeting . . .* (Oldham, 1836), *passim*; 'Alfred', II, 329-30.
30. *A Voice from the Factories* (1836), 21; *LD*, 18 Dec., *seq.*
31. *QR*, LI, 101 (Mar. 1834); M. F. Brightfield: *J. W. Croker* (1940), 203; *QR*, LVII, 114 (Dec. 1836), 396-443.
32. E. Abbott, L. Campbell: *The Life of B. Jowett, M.A. . . .* (1897), I, ch. 1.
33. Select Committee, 1840, 6th Report, 1-35.
34. *PP*, 1837-8, VIII, 256.
35. *The THB* (Auty notice, 13 Jan. 1837).
36. *MSA*, 28 Jan.
37. Manchester STC Memorial, *PP*, 1837, L, 203-8; Horner, 12 Oct. 1836 (*PP*, 1837, XXXI, 72) and circular, 7 Nov. 1836 (*ib.* 104).

38. Horner to Russell (*PP*, 1837, L, 208-10); *PP*, 1838, XXVIII, 89; E. Saunders: *The Teeth a Test of Age* . . . (1837).
39. C. Wing: *Evils of the Factory System* (1837), i, xxxvii, xix.
40. R. H. Greg, *passim*.
41. *Ib.* 127-38; *Misrepresentations Exposed*, 20-6.
42. N. Senior: *Letters on the Factory Act* (1837), *passim*.
43. *Yorkshire, 50 Years of Progress* (Leeds, 1887), 16; Cudworth, *Manningham*, 115, 300, *Bradford*, 19, 107, 173, *Horton*, 27; James, 482.
44. H. Hamer: *Bolton, 1838-1938* (Bolton, 1939), 17; *Yorkshire*, 56; Cudworth, *Horton*, 223.
45. Ashton, *Investigations*, 25.
46. Redford, *Manchester Merchants*, 81; *MT*, 23 Apr., 16 Dec.
47. W. G. Rimmer: 'The Flax Industry' (*Leeds Journal*, May 1954).
48. *PP*, 1839, XLII, 1840, XXIV; *FP*, I, 35 (28 Aug. 1841); cf. *Capital Arraigned against Labour* (Macclesfield, 1837).
49. *MSA*, 21 Apr.
50. Oldham report, 27-8; R. Oastler: *The NPL and the THB* (Bradford, 1836).
51. 'Alfred', II, 78.
52. R. Oastler: *Damnation, Eternal Damnation to the . . . NPL* (1837), 4, 7-13, 15, 16, 18, 20-2. See D. Read, E. L. H. Glasgow: *F. O'Connor* (1961).
53. Holyoake, *Stephens*, 143.
54. *HHE*, 22 Feb.; *The Times*, 18, 22, 27 Feb., 6, 9, 14 Mar.; Oastler, *Damnation*, 23-4.
55. *The Times*, 8 Feb.; Gill, 163-5; *The PL Act* (Bradford, 23 Jan.), 3.
56. *The Times*, 4 Jan.; Holden, 189-90; W. B. Ferrand: *The Great Mott Question* (1844), 16; C. Whone in *KN*, 13 Sept. 1952.
57. G. S. Bull: *The PL Inquisitors and Mr. Bull* (Bradford, 13 Feb.); Gill, 169-70.
58. Oastler, *Damnation*, 12-13; *Bronterre's National Reformer*, 7 Jan., 11 Feb.
59. *NPL. Substance of the Speech of Earl Stanhope . . .* (1837), 2, 5, 8, 13; *Earl Stanhope's Speech on the NPL* (Leeds, 1837); *The Times*, 22, 27 Feb., 14 Mar., on London meetings. Cf. T. E. Kebbel: *A History of Toryism* (1886), 277-82.
60. *Great Meeting in the Crown and Anchor . . .* (1837), 15, 16; *Champion*, 5 Mar.
61. *The Times*, *passim*; *LI*, 22 Apr.
62. *NL*, 30 Dec.; Place MSS. 27, 819, f. 229.
63. F. O'Connor: *Letters to D. O'Connell, Esq., M.P.* . . . (1837), 63-74.
64. *The PL Act. Public Meeting at Bradford . . .* (Bradford, 1837); *LI*, 11 Mar.
65. *LI*, 11 Mar.; *The Times*, 21 Mar.
66. *FP*, I, 26-8 (26 June, 3, 10 July 1841).
67. *To the Farming Labourers . . .* (1837), *passim*.
68. W. Denison: *Abstract of Evidence . . . (on) the PLA Act* (1837), xii.
69. S. Gower: *What are PLs for?* (1837), *A Word or Two to Mr. George Tinker of Scholes* (Holmfirth, 1837); R. H. Nicholls: *Practical Remarks on the Severities of the NPL* (Aug. 1837), 11.
70. R. Blakey: *An Exposure of the Cruelty and Inhumanity of the*

NPL Bill . . . (Newcastle, 1837), 4, *A Second Letter* . . . (Newcastle, Mar. 1837), 8.

71. *The Times*, 12, 19, 26 May, 8 June; M. Fletcher: *Migration of Agricultural Labourers* (Bury, Aug. 1837), 4.

72. *A Voice from the North of England* (1837); *The PL Bill Explained* (Huddersfield, 1837).

73. *Give It A Fair Trial*, 3, *The PL Bill Exposed*, Huddersfield pamphlets, 1837.

74. *NPL. Letter from Earl Stanhope to Mr. Oastler* (May 1837), 2, 7-8.

75. S. Roberts: *A Defence of the PLs* (Sheffield, 1819), 4, *Lord Brougham and the NPLs* (1838), 3, *The Peers, the People and the Poor* (1838), 19, 27, *A Letter to the Working Classes* (Sheffield, 1838), 2-5, *A Solemn Appeal to the Ministers of the Gospel* (Sheffield, 1837), 11.

76. *Church of England QR*, III, 1 (Jan. 1838), 224-5.

77. J. Barratt, W. Burden: *Address . . . to the People of England* . . . (n.d.), 3-16.

78. W. J. Butler: *NPL. A Friendly Letter addressed to R. Oastler, Esq.* (Nottingham, Feb. 1838), *passim*; W. C. Wilson: *Remarks on Certain Operations of the NPL* (Kirby Lonsdale, 1838), 3, 4, 27.

79. J. T. Perceval: *Letter to Mr. J. Bowen* (Feb. 1838), 2, *Observations on the NPL* (1838), 3; G. G. Vincent: *Letter to Mr. J. Bowen* (1838), 5, 6, 21.

80. S. G. Osborne: *A Word or Two about the NPL* (n.d.); F. Close: *Pauperism traced to its true source* (1838), 17.

81. *LI, LM, LT, HG*, 29 Apr.; *Why do the Radicals support Mr. Oastler* . . . , 28 Apr.

82. *The Times*, 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, *LI, LM, LT, HG*, 6, 13, *MH*, 1, *MC*, 8 May; R. Oastler: *Letter to the Bishop of Exeter* (Manchester, 1838), 8.

83. *The Times*, 16, 18, 19, *LI, LM*, 19, *BO*, 17, *HG*, 23 May. Brougham later commented that Stephens misunderstood the meaning of the word 'tocsin'!

84. *LI*, 10, 17, 24 June; Oastler, *Letter*, 9-12.

85. *The Times*, 10, 18 Apr., 30 May, 3, 8 June, etc.; H. L. Jephson: *The Platform, Its Rise and Progress* (1892), II, 210.

86. W. Busfield: *To the Free and Independent Electors*, 22 June, Thompson poster, 23 June; *BO, LM, LI*, *passim*.

87. W. E. Monypenny: *Life of Disraeli* (1910), I, 373; Baines, *Life*, 237; *The Times*, 11 July.

88. Huddersfield posters; J. Hanson: *View Extraordinary of Sir John's Huddersfield Menagerie* . . . (Leeds, 1837), 3, 4; *The Times*, 29, 31 July, *LI, LM*, 15, 22, 29 July, 5 Aug. G. D. H. Cole: *British Working Class Politics* (1941), 238, misdates the election as occurring in 1838.

89. Oastler, O'Connor, Fawkes posters; *The Times*, 1 Aug.; R. Oastler: *WR Nomination Riot* (24 Aug.), *passim*; *The Times*, 4, *LI, LM*, 5 Aug.

90. J. S. Wortley to Lady Wharnccliffe, 31 July (Grosvenor and Stuart, II, 283); Peel, *Spen Valley*, 311.

91. G. Loveless: *Victims of Whiggery* (Aug. 1837); *HG*, 15 Aug.; see E. Glasgow: 'Establishment of the NS' (*History*, XXXIX, 135-6: 1954).

92. S. Chadwick: *The Factory King* (Kirkburton, 1944), 7.

93. Oastler, *Letter*, 14-15, 18-22; *LM, LI*, 4 Nov.

94. *The Times*, 28 Nov., 16 Dec.
95. *LM*, 5, 11 Nov.; 'Alfred', II, 118-20; *Report of Proceedings* . . . (Leeds, 1837), *passim*.
96. Oastler, *Letter*, 14-15; *LI*, 24 Nov., 9, 16 Dec.; *The Times*, 23-5 Nov., 1, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18 Dec.; Oastler, *Siege of Bradford*, notice, 7 Dec.
97. *PP*, 1837-8, VIII, 280; R. G. Gammage: *History of the Chartist Movement* (1894 ed.), 57.
98. *Journal of H. Cockburn* (Edinburgh, 1874), I, 157.
99. *NS*, 23 Dec.
100. R. Oastler: *The Right of the Poor to Liberty and Life* (Jan. 1838), 14, 29, 34.
101. *NS*, 2, 23 Dec.; Oastler to Thornhill, 16 Nov. (*FP*, I, 27: 3 July 1841).
102. *NS*, 18 Nov., 9, 30 Dec.
103. Gammage (1854 ed.), 64-5 (1894 ed.), 55-9; *NS*, 6, *LD*, 7 Jan. 1838.
104. G. R. W. Baxter: *The Book of Bastilles* (1841), 392-3; *NS*, 13 Jan.
105. Jephson, II, 216-18; *NS*, *LT*, 13 Jan.
106. Taylor to Thomson (*HO*, 52/37).

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Stanhope to Oastler, 23 Dec. 1837, 19, 25 Jan. 1838 (R. Oastler: *Brougham versus Brougham* (1847), xviii-xix).
2. J. Easby: *J. R. Stephens Unveiled* (Manchester, 1 Nov. 1837), 2-7, 9, 6, 12, 15-16.
3. Place MSS. 27, 820, f. 219; 27, 821, f. 226.
4. R. Oastler to Lord J. Russell (*NS*, 20 Jan. 1838).
5. Oastler, *Right of the Poor* (19 Jan.), 53, *Letter to* . . . *Exeter* (23 Mar.), 4, 17.
6. *Speech of R. Oastler, Esq.* . . . 20 April 1838.
7. Jephson, II, 218-19; *NS*, *The Examiner*, 10 Feb.
8. *The Times*, 22 Dec. 1837, 8, 20, 22, 27 Feb. 1838; *MSA*, 30 June.
9. *NS*, *passim*; Address of the Anti-Poor Law Association Committee.
10. *NS*, 18 Feb., 12 May, etc., 31 Mar.-21 Apr. On circulation, see Beckwith, xli, Read, 216.
11. *HG*, 23 Jan.
12. C. S. Parker: *Sir R. Peel* (1891), II, 359-60; H. Grote: *Personal Life of G. Grote* (1873), 127.
13. *Speech of Lord Brougham in the HL, on Mar. 20th, 1838* (1838), 21-3.
14. *LM*, *LI*, *NS*, *passim*.
15. G. S. Bull: *The NPL shown to be unconstitutional* (30 May), 13, 16; Gill, 169-76.
16. Holyoake, *Stephens*, 124; Place MSS. 27, 820, f. 141.
17. Holden, 190-1; *The Times*, 10 July.
18. *FP*, I, 26-7 (26 June, 3 July 1841); *The Home*, VII, 172 (12 Aug. 1854); *LI*, *NS*, 15 Sept.
19. *LI*, 19, 26 May; Oastler in *NS*, 16 June, *seq.*; *NS*, 30 June, *seq.*, *LI*, 14 July, etc.
20. *NS*, 4, 18, *LI*, 11, 18, 25 Aug.; *NL*, 27 July.

21. NS, 9 June, etc.; Holyoake, *Stephens*, 16; J. Morley: *The Life of R. Cobden* (1910 ed.), 124; F. M. Rosenblatt: *Chartist Movement in its Social and Economic Aspects* (New York, 1916).
22. NS, 13 Oct., 27 Apr. 1839. Hanson and Hobson published socialist pamphlets.
23. *The Times*, 29 Aug.; LI, NS, LM, HG, 1 Sept.; FP, I, 27 (3 July 1841); *The Home*, VII, 172 (12 Aug. 1854).
24. Posters; LI, HG, 25 Aug.; NS, 1, 15, 22, LI, 15 Sept.
25. *The Standard*, 8 Sept., etc.; Place MSS. 27, 821, f. 4.
26. Ann. Reg. (1838), 311; MG, 26, NS, LT, MSA, MT, 29 Sept.; Wearmouth, *passim*.
27. Trevelyan, *Bright*, 30; DNB, XLVI (1896), 301-3; N. McCord: *The ACLL, 1838-1846* (1958), 34-5; NS, 29 Sept.
28. A. Prentice: *History of the ACLL* (1853), I, 73-4, 105-6; cf. McCord, 35-6.
29. T. Cooper: *Life of Thomas Cooper, written by himself* (1872), 136.
30. *Wigan Gazette*, 16 Nov.
31. NL, 29 Dec.; NS, 27 Oct., 16 Oct.; LT, 20 Oct.; Jephson, II, 247-8.
32. NS, 17 Nov.
33. P. Bussey: *Address to the Working Men of England* (Bradford, 1838), *passim*.
34. NS, 17 Nov., 9 Dec.; *Examiner*, 9 Dec.; *The Times*, 28 Nov., 4 Dec., etc.
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CHAPTER NINE

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3. 1st report, 1-125, 147-8.
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5. *SMM*, 3-6, 8, 10 (Mar.-June, Aug., Oct.).
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12. *QR*, LXVII, 133 (Dec. 1840), 171-81.
13. *LI*, *HG*, *NS*, 26, *Planet*, 27 Dec.
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15. *To the Working Men of Yorkshire* . . . , leaflet.
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17. *FP*, I, 2, 4 (9, 23 Jan.).
18. Hodder, I, 325-6; *FP*, I, 8, 15, 22, 24, 25 (20 Feb., 10 Apr., 29 May, 12, 19 June).

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20. *Liverpool Mail*, 16 Jan.
21. *The Times*, 16, 22 Feb.
22. *FP*, I, 4, 5 (23, 30 Jan.).
23. *Ib.* I, 6 (6 Feb.).
24. *LI*, 22 May.
25. Ashley's diary, 10, 18, 13 Feb. (Hodder, I, 328-9).
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27. *PP*, 1841, II, 425.
28. *The Times*, 31 Mar.; *PP*, 1841, II, 459.
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33. *FP*, I, 12, 14, 15, 20-22, 25 (20 Mar., 3, 10 Apr., 15, 22, 29 May, 19 June).
34. *HG*, 17 Apr., *LI*, 24 Apr., 8, 22 May, 26 June, 3 July.
35. *NS*, 29 May, 12, 19, 26 June, 3 July; *FP*, I, 32 (7 Aug.); Read, Glasgow, 95.
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44. Ashley to Peel, 26 July, to Bonham, 16 Aug., diary, 24 July (Hodder, I, 342).
45. Luke Swallow to Oastler, 30 Sept.; *HG*, *LI*, 25 Sept.; *FP*, I, 41-2 (9, 16 Oct.); Driver, 438-9; Croft, 124-5; 'Alfred', II, 148-56.
46. *HG*, *LI*, 7 Aug.; *FP*, I, 33-4 (14, 21 Aug.); Ashley's diary, 2, 6 Aug. (Hodder, I, 346); Ashley to Balme, 5 Aug.; 'Alfred', II, 170-1; Hodder, I, 339-40.
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48. Ashley's diary, 27 Aug. (Hodder, I, 348).
49. Peel to Ashley, 30 Aug., 2 Sept., Ashley to Peel, 2, 3 Sept.;

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51. Peel to Ashley, 7, 9, Ashley's diary, 11 Sept. (Hodder, I, 360), 3 Aug. (*ib.* 357).

52. *Report of the Statistical Committee appointed by the A.C.L. Conference . . .* (1842); Ashworth, *art. cit.*

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CHAPTER TEN

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2. 'Alfred', II, 168; *FP*, I, 43 (23 Oct.).

3. *FP*, I, 43 (23 Oct.).

4. *The TH Factory Question . . .* (1842), 15, 17, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 34; *NS*, *MSA*, 8, 15 Jan. 1842; *FP*, II, 2-5 (1-29 Jan.); Croft, 127-8; 'Alfred', II, 185-6.

5. *The . . . Question*, 34; *FP*, 43, 46-7 (23 Oct., 13, 20 Nov.).

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7. *MSA*, 9 Oct.; Saunders, 30 June.

8. *FP*, I, 48-52, II, *passim*; *Standard*, 29 Sept.; *Liverpool Standard*, 1, *MSA*, 2, *The Age*, 3, *Sheffield Iris*, 5, *LI*, *NS*, 9, *HG*, 16, 23 Oct.; *MSA*, 6 Nov., etc.

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10. *Ib. passim*; *The . . . Question*, 7; *MSA*, 24 Dec.

11. Morgan, *Parish Priest*, 98.

12. Cobden to Bright, 9 Oct. (Trevelyan, 65-6).

13. *The Struggle*, 1, 2, 3.

14. W. R. Greg: *Not Over-Production, but Deficient Consumption, the Source of our Suffering* (1842), 4, 5, 13, 15, 23; R. H. Greg: *A Letter on the Pressure of the CLs* (1841); *LI*, 11 Dec.

15. *NS*, 11 Dec. (list of banners at Huddersfield meeting, 4 Dec.).

16. Russell to Lansdowne, 12 Nov., to Lady Holland, 27 Oct. (G. P. Gooch: *Later Correspondence of Lord J. Russell* (1925), I, 50, 49).

17. Ashley to Peel, 21, to F. R. Bonham, 18 Jan. (Hodder, I, 403; Gash, *art. cit.* and *Politics in the Age of Peel* (1953), 399).

18. Peel to Ashley, 22 Jan.; Hodder, I, 403-4; Gash, *art. cit.*

19. Ashley, *To the STCs* . . . , 2, diary, 3 Feb. (Hodder, I, 403); *FP*, II, 19 (7 May); *MP*, 4 Feb.
20. *MH*, *Standard*, 13, *WJ*, 14, *MSA*, 15 Jan., *BH*, 3, *LI*, 5 Feb.
21. *BH*, 13 Jan.; Gooch, I, 54.
22. *FP*, II, 1-8 (1 Jan.-19 Feb.); cf. Coningsby (1844), Bk. II, ch. 6: "A sound Conservative Government", said Taper musingly. "I understand: Tory men and Whig measures".
23. *FP*, II, 9-12 (26 Feb.-19 Mar.); *NS*, 5 Feb.; Ashley's diary, 24 Feb. (Hodder, I, 409).
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26. W. B. Ferrand: *Speech* . . . 14 Feb. 1842 (1842), 1-4; *The Britannia*, 19, *The Times*, 15, 16, *BH*, 17, *Manchester Chronicle*, 19 Feb.
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28. W. B. Ferrand: *Second Speech, The CLs* . . . Feb. 24, 1842 (1842), 2-7.
29. *Standard*, 25, 26, *The Times*, 25, 26, 28, *Courier*, *MP*, *MH*, *Britannia*, *Scotsman*, *MC*, 26 Feb.
30. *BH*, 10, 17, *LI*, 12, *LM*, 12, *MG*, 18 Mar.; *LI*, 23, *BH*, 28, *The Times*, 20 Apr.; Duncombe, I, 306; Ferrand speech Padiham, 4 Dec. 1852.
31. *MC*, 28 Feb.; *The Times*, 1 Mar.; *FP*, II, 11-12 (12, 19 Mar.).
32. *The Manufacturers, Their System and Their Operatives* (1842), 3-5, 7, 9, 11, 14-16.
33. *The Times*, 18, *MH*, 19 Mar.; *FP*, II, 13 (26 Mar.); *LI*, 30 Apr., 7 May, *LCJ*, 7 May.
34. *LM*, 19 Feb.; *NS*, *passim*; *British Statesman*, *The Non-conformist*, *passim*.
35. Bright, 5, 9 Mar., Livesey to Cobden, 14 Feb. (Trevelyan, 78, McCord, 123, 119); *Report of Statistical Committee* (20 Mar.), 9, 13.
36. *NS*, *The Times*, *passim*.
37. Boddington to Oastler, 8, 2 Mar.; Ashley's diary, 3, 11 Mar. (Hodder, I, 409, 410).
38. *FP*, II, 14-22 (2 Apr.-28 May).
39. *Ib.* II, 13 (26 Mar.).
40. Buckingham 22 Apr., Hardy, Mahon, 5, Sandys, 7 May, Wharnccliffe, 10 March, 21 June to Balme (Balme Coll.).
41. W. B. Ferrand: *The Great Mott Question* (1844), *passim*; *Hansard*, LXIII, 433; *MH*, *The Times*, 12, *Standard*, 13 May.
42. *Standard*, 8 June, *The Times*, 7 July, etc.; *MP*, 28 June; *FP*, II, 32 (6 Aug.).
43. Ashley's diary, 9, 11 June (Hodder, I, 422).
44. *Blackburn Standard*, 4 May; *Ann. Reg.*, LXXXIV, ii, 102; Schoyen, 113-14.
45. *FP*, II, 33 (13 Aug.); *QR*, LXXI, 280 (Dec. 1842).
46. *MG*, 3, *NS*, 13, 20 Aug.
47. *MG*, 10, 13, 17, *SA*, 12, *BC*, 13, *MC*, 13, *The Times*, 12 Aug., etc.
48. *Blackburn Standard*, 17, *The Times*, 19, *NS*, *MG*, *MSA*, 20 Aug.; Clemesha, 220, Miller, 137-43, Jephson, II, 378-80, Clegg, 88-9, Scholes, 488, Speake and Whitty, 68, Bateson, 111.
49. See T. E. Ashworth: *An Account of the Todmorden PL Riots* . . . (Todmorden, 1901).
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301; Cudworth, *Horton*, 29; G. R. Dalby: 'The Chartist Movement in Halifax and District' (*THAS*, 1956); Fletcher, 143; Cooper, 206.

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52. Croker, II, 389; C. S. Parker: *Life of Sir J. Graham* (1907), I, 324; A. B. Erickson: *The Public Career of Sir J. Graham* (Oxford, 1952), 164-5.

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54. *QR*, LXXI, 141 (Dec. 1842), 244-314; Croker, II, 388 *seq.*; Brightfield, 433.

55. Trevelyan, 81-3; *LM*, 20 Aug.; *MG*, 7, 22 Sept.; McCord, 130-1.

56. Engels (tr. Henderson and Chaloner), 262-3, 265; *cf.* Rothstein, 72-3.

57. See Hovell, 259-63; P. W. Slosson: *The Decline of the Chartist Movement* (New York, 1916), 67-9; Peel, *Risings*, ch. 39; Maccoby, 236-42; Jephson, II, 378-80; E. Halevy: *Victorian Years* (1951), 28-38; Beer, II, 151; Henderson and Chaloner, xv; McCord, 121-31; F. C. Mather: *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists* (Manchester, 1959). For a High Tory view, see C. Whibley: *Lord John Manners and his Friends* (1925), I, 125-6, 137-8. The most detailed accounts are G. S. R. Kitson Clark: 'Hunger and Politics in 1842' (*Four. of Mod. History*, XXV, 4: Dec. 1953) and A. G. Rose: 'The Plug Plots of 1842 in Lancashire and Cheshire' (*Trans. Lancs. and Cheshire Antiq. Soc.*, LXVII, 1957).

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60. *PP*, 1842, XV; 5 and 6 Vict., c. 99.

61. Ashley, *Answer to Lancashire STC*, diary, 29 Sept. (Hodder, I, 443-7); *MH*, 30 Sept.; see my article, 'A Lost Opportunity in Education: 1843' (*Researches and Studies*, 20: Oct. 1959).

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65. J. Tunstall, R. Jackson to Oastler, 13 Sept. (*FP*, II, 41: 8 Oct.).

66. *FP*, II, 45, 48, 50, 49 (5, 26 Nov., 10, 3 Dec.); Trevelyan, 86-7; *The Times*, 6 Oct.

67. *Nonconformist*, 31 Dec.; Cooper, 222 *seq.*

68. *FP*, II, 53 (31 Dec.), III, 5 (4 Feb. 1843); Pounder to Oastler, 31 Dec. (*ib.* III, 3: 21 Jan. 1843).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Croker to Graham, 28 Jan. (Graham MSS.); *cf.* *FP*, III, 5, 6 4, 11 Feb.).

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4. J. Almack: *Character, Motives and Proceedings of the ACL Leaguers* (1843), *passim*.
5. Harwood, 56-119, *passim*.
6. W. B. Ferrand: *The Distress of the Country. Speech . . .* Feb. 13, 1843 (1843), 5-24; *FP*, III, 8, 10-12 (25 Feb., 11-25 Mar.).
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8. James Wade to Ferrand, 5, L. K. Royston, 30 Mar., B. Gummersall, 12 May, James Banks, 6 Apr. (Ferrand MSS.); *FP*, III, 18 (6 May).
9. Ferrand to Richard Dewes, 6 Mar. (Ferrand MSS.); *FP*, III, 8, 10 (25 Feb., 11 Mar.).
10. W. B. Ferrand: *Allotment of Waste Lands. Speech . . .* Mar. 30, 1843 (1843), 6-28; *The Times*, 31 Mar.; *FP*, III, 16 (22 Apr.).
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12. Ferrand's diary, *passim* (YAS); *FP*, III, 35 (2 Sept.).
13. *Hansard*, LXVII, 47-75; Lord Ashley: *Moral and Religious Education of the Working Classes* (1843), *Speeches*, 63-81.
14. *Hansard*, LXVII, *passim*; *PP*, 1843, II, 495.
15. Graham to Ashley, 4 Mar. (Graham MSS.).
16. *Ann. Reg.*, 1843, 195.
17. Graham to Gleig, 6 Mar. (Graham MSS.).
18. E. Baines, jr.: *Letter to Lord Wharnccliffe . . .* (Leeds, 1843), *passim*, *The Manufacturing Districts Vindicated* (Leeds, 1843), *passim*.
19. Hodder, I, 457; *Journals of the HC*, XCVIII, 1843, 149 *seq.*
20. *The Patriot*, 30 Mar.; *Nonconformist*, III, 319; *Manchester Herald*, 29 Apr., 13 May; R. G. Cowherd, *Dissent*, 127.
21. *DA*, 5, *DC*, 9 May, *A Speech delivered by the Rev. D. K. Shoebotham . . .* (Dundee, 1843), 7; *GA*, 15, 18, *GC*, 18, *Scotch Reformers Gazette*, 20, *AJ*, 19 May; see my article, 'The Factory Reform Movement in Scotland' (*SHR*, XLI, 132: Oct. 1962).
22. *LM*, 18 Mar., 8 Apr., etc.; *MT*, 25 Mar., *seq.*; *GA*, 18 May (*cf. ib.* 9 Mar., 4, 8, 15 May); *DA*, 9 June; *AJ*, 8 Mar., 19 May; *cf. DC*, 9 May.
23. J. C. Symons: *Light and Life for the People* (1843), 10; *Strictures on the Education Clauses of the Altered Factories Bill* (1843), 4.
24. J. C. Evans: *Letter to Sir J. Graham, Bart.* (1843), 3; F. A. Cox: *No Modifications. A Letter . . . to Lord J. Russell* (1843), 9; A. Reed: *Factories Education Bill. A Speech* (1843), 6, 7, 12; *DA*, 9 June.
25. H. Dunn: *The Bill or the Alternative* (1843), 9, 18.
26. *An Analytical Digest of the Education Clauses . . .* (1843), 13, 38-9; E. Baines, jr.: *The Social, Educational and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts . . .* (London and Leeds, 1843), *passim*.
27. *LM*, 22 Apr.; E. Baines, jr.: *The Labour Clauses of Sir J. Graham's Factory Bill* (1843), 10.
28. *Reasons against Government Interference in Education* (1843), *passim*; S. Murch: *Ten Objections against the Factories Education Bill* (1843), 6, 9, 10.

29. Graham to Peel, 13 Apr. (Graham MSS.); Report of Select Committee of HC on Petitions, 27 June.

30. *PP*, 1843, XXVII, *passim*.

31. *A Few Words to Lord Ashley from a Country Clergyman* (1843); G. W. Sandys: *A Letter to . . . Sir J. R. G. Graham . . .* (1843), 9, 13.

32. Graham to Powys, 17 Mar. (Graham MSS.).

33. F. Smith: *Life of Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth* (1923), 148.

34. *FP*, III, 17, 19, 21, 22 (29 Apr., 13, 27 May, 3 June); *cf. ib.* 23-5, 27.

35. Gladstone to Hook, 12 Mar. 1838 (Lord Morley: *The Life of W. E. Gladstone* (1903), I, 148; *cf. ib.* II, 299); *cf.* A. F. Robbins: *The Early Public Life of W. E. Gladstone* (1894), 346 *seq.*

36. Graham to Gladstone, to Stanley, 25 Mar. (Graham MSS.).

37. *Hansard*, LXVII, 1414 *seq.*; Ashley to Graham, two letters, 28 Mar. (Graham MSS.).

38. *Hansard*, LXVIII, 745; Graham to Bishop of London, 20 Apr. (Graham MSS.).

39. Graham to Peel, 13, Ashley to Graham, 26 Apr. (Graham MSS.).

40. *Hansard*, LXVIII, 1104 *seq.*, LXIX, 1567; *PP*, 1843, II, 549, 607.

41. Peel to Ashley, 16 June (Hodder, I, 460); Ashley to Peel, 17 June (Parker, *Peel*, II, 561-2).

42. *Globe*, 20 Apr.; Ashley's diary, 11 May (Hodder, I, 457).

43. *PP*, 1843, XXVII, 385; Hook to Saunders, 6, to Gladstone, 28 Mar. (W. R. W. Stephens: *Life and Letters of W. F. Hook* (1879), II, 113-16); W. F. Hook: *On the Means of rendering more efficient the education of the people* (1846). Saunders asserted that Baines had misinterpreted a private letter, dishonestly obtained; and Hook denied Baines' charges in the *British Mag.*; see *Self-Exposure of Mr. E. Baines . . .* (Leeds, 1843), *LM*, 7, *LI*, 7, 14 Oct.

44. *MP*, 18 Mar.; *The Times*, 12 May; *NS*, 6 May, 17 June; *Auty to Peel*, 23 May.

45. Ashley's diary, 16, 17 June (Hodder, I, 459-60). For a modern Congregationalist view, see F. R. Salter: 'Congregationalism and the "Hungry Forties"' (*Trans. Congregational Hist. Soc.*, XVII, 4: Nov. 1955). Baines repeated his case in *Letters to Lord J. Russell* (London and Leeds, 1846), but later was converted to the cause of State intervention.

46. *Manchester Herald*, 27 May, 17 June, 1, 15 July; *HG*, 15 July; *FP*, III, 42 (21 Oct.).

47. Ashley's diary, 8 July (Hodder, I, 477-80); 'Alfred', II, 190-1.

48. *FP*, III, 32, 35, 36, 42, 44 (12 Aug., 2, 9 Sept., 21 Oct., 4 Nov.); *HG*, 21 Oct.

49. *FP*, III, 33, 36, 47 (19 Aug., 9 Sept., 25 Nov.); *NS*, 11 Nov.

50. *WJ*, 28 July, 25 Aug.; *FP*, III, 37 (16 Sept.); Burroughs' Address, 12 Aug., memorials, 12 Aug., 30 Nov.; Burroughs to Oastler, 10, Gladstone to Graham, 30 Nov.; Burroughs to Gladstone, 12 Mar., 5, 30 Apr., 8, 13 May 1844; Northcote replies, 27 Apr., 1, 9 May.

51. *The Times*, 8 Sept., etc.; *LI*, 30 Sept., 14 Oct.; *FP*, III, 43 (28 Oct.).

52. Hodder, I, 514, 519-22; Cobden to Henry Cole, 22, 27 June 1839 (McCord, 69-70); see A. Somerville: *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (1848), *The Whistler at the Plough* (Manchester, 1852), 32-6, and H. Martineau: *Thirty Years Peace* (1849), II, 553.

53. Graham to Peel, 21 Dec. (Graham MSS.).
54. *The Times*, 18 Nov. See McCord, ch. 6, and H. D. Jordan: 'The Political Methods of the ACLL' (*Pol. Science Quarterly*, XLII, 1: Mar. 1927).
55. J. D. Fernley: *An Appeal to Manufacturers* (Manchester, 25 Oct.), 9; *The League*, 11 Nov., 23 Dec.
56. O'Connor, *The Trial*, v.
57. *ER*, LXXIX, Jan. 1844; Hayek, 21.
58. *The Times*, 23, 26, 28 Sept., 3 Oct.; *LI*, 14 Oct.; *NS*, 30 Sept., 7 Oct.; *WJ*, 27 Oct., 3, 10 Nov., etc.
59. *NS*, *LI*, *HG*, 18, *The Times*, 20, *SA*, 24 Nov., etc.; *FP*, III, 52 (30 Dec.); 'Alfred', II, 205.
60. *HG*, *LI*, *NS*, 25, *WJ*, 24 Nov.; *Hull Packet*, 1 Dec.; *FP*, III, 49 (9 Dec.).
61. *BO*, 30 Nov.; *HG*, *LI*, 2 Dec.; *WJ*, 1 Dec.
62. *NS*, *HG*, *LI*, 2 Dec.; *BO*, 16 Nov.; *Nottingham Journal*, 8 Dec.
63. *Literary Gaz.*, 2, *Church Intelligencer*, 13, *WJ*, 1, 8, *The Times*, 6, 9, *NS*, 2, *HG*, 9 Dec.
64. *LI*, *LM*, *NS*, *HG*, 9 Dec. Hobson was now a Leeds councillor and edited the *NS*.
65. *LI*, 9, *WJ*, 15 Dec.
66. *Standard*, 9, *MP*, 13, *MH*, 15, *The Times*, *Shropshire Cons.*, *M. Courier*, *MSA*, 9, *WJ*, 15 Dec.
67. *FP*, III, 50 (16 Dec.); *Globe*, 14, 15, *Standard*, 15, 18, *HG*, 2, 16 Dec.; *FP*, III, 51-2.
68. *HG*, 16 Dec.
69. *MSA*, *M. Courier*, 16, *SA*, 22, *HG*, 23, *The League*, 16, 23 Dec.; *FP*, IV, 3 (20 Jan. 1844).
70. J. Mitchell: *Letter to W. B. Ferrand, Esq., M.P., and to Mr. R. Oastler* (Manchester, 1844), *passim*; *The Times*, 21, 26, 30 Dec., 5, 6 Jan.; *Standard*, 27, *S. James' Chron.*, 23, 28, *HG*, 30, *SA*, 29 Dec.; *The League*, 30 Dec., 6, 13 Jan.
71. *The Times*, 19, 21, 22, *SA*, 22, *BC*, *HG*, 23 Dec.
72. *The Times*, 22, *PC*, *Preston Pilot*, 23 Dec.
73. *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 Dec., *seq.*, *Liverpool Standard*, 2, 5 Jan. 1844.
74. *MC*, 27, *The League*, 23 Dec.
75. Graham to Wharnccliffe, 26 Dec. (Graham MSS.).
76. *The League*, *S. James' Chron.*, 30 Dec.; *SA*, 12 Jan.; *Standard*, 30 Dec.; *The Times*, 1, *Liverpool Standard*, 2 Jan.
77. *Sheffield Mercury*, 6 Jan.
78. *LI*, 2, 23, *HG*, 9, 16, *The Times*, 19, 20 Dec.; *Warwickshire Standard*, 6, *Hull Packet*, 5 Jan.
79. *Saunders' News Letter*, 24, *HG*, 27 Jan.; *FP*, IV, 5 (3 Feb.); *Nottingham Jour.*, 9 Feb.
80. Mitchell, *Letter*, 1, 9, 25, 32.
81. N. Smith: *The League, The Tory Press and The Assassins* (1844), 2, 3, 7, 12, 15.
82. *The League*, 20 Jan.
83. Prentice, II, 145.
84. *The Times*, 9, *NS*, *HG*, 10 Feb.; *ILN*, IV, 97, 98 (9, 16 Mar.); posters.
85. *NS*, 6 Jan., reprinted in Y. V. Kovalev: *An Anthology of Chartist Literature* (Moscow, 1956), 95 (preface translated by W. H. Chaloner, in *VS*, II, 2, Dec. 1958).

86. *The Times*, *MH*, 13 Feb.; *ILN*, IV, 94 (17 Feb.); 'Alfred', II, 201-3.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. *PP*, 1844, II, 149; *Hansard*, LXXII, 277 seq., 518. Ashley made the same point on 20 July 1838 (*ib.* XLIV, 383 seq.).
2. *The Times*, 20, *Birmingham Advertiser*, 22, *WJ*, 23, *LI*, *LM*, 24 Feb., *ILN*, IV, 95 (24 Feb.).
3. Grant, 74-6; W. B. Pemberton: *Lord Palmerston* (1954), 120.
4. *LI*, 2 Mar.
5. E. S. Cayley: *Reasons for the Formation of the Agricultural Protection Society* (Apr.), 16; cf. *The Times*, *The League*, *passim*; G. L. Mosse: 'The Anti-League, 1844-1846' (*ECHR*, XVII, 2: 1947).
6. *LM*, 2 Mar.-6 Apr.; E. Baines, jr.: *Five Letters to the Earl of Harewood* . . . (1844).
7. *ILN*, IV, 97 (9 Mar.); *ib.* IV, 105 (4 May) revised a biography of Ferrand given in I, 7 (25 June 1842).
8. Underwood to Oastler, 26 June (*FP*, IV, 36: 7 Sept.); 'Alfred', II, 201-2; Driver, 459-60.
9. *The Times*, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 27, *MH*, *Standard*, 20, *Saunders' News Letter*, 23 Feb.
10. Ashley's diary, 27 Feb., 2 Mar. (Hodder, II, 22).
11. *LI*, 9 Mar.; 'Alfred', II, 211-13.
12. *LI*, 9, 16 Mar.; 'Alfred', II, 213-14.
13. *M. Courier*, *MT*, 16, *The Times*, 15 Mar.
14. Ashley's diary, 4, 8, 9, 12 Mar. (Hodder, II, 22-3).
15. *Hansard*, LXXIII, 1073 seq.; Ashley's diary, 16 Mar. (Hodder, II, 29); Grant, 78.
16. Peel to Graham, 17 Mar. (Graham MSS.); *Hansard*, LXXIII, 1202 seq.; *MP*, 18, *The Times*, 20 Mar.
17. Ashley's diary, 19, 21 Mar. (Hodder, II, 33-4); Grant, 82-3; *The ST Bill* (Rider, 20 Mar.); *Limitation of Factory Labour* (Balme, 21 Mar.).
18. *DA*, 29, *GA*, 21, *GC*, 19, 21, 23, *The Glasgow Constitutional*, 23, 27, *The League*, 23 Mar.; cf. *MC*, *MG*, 20 Mar., *MT*, 20 Apr.
19. Peel to the Queen, 19 Mar. (B. Holland: *The Fall of Protection* (1913), 229).
20. Smith to Lady Grey, 19 Mar. (N. C. Smith: *The Letters of S. Smith* (Oxford, 1953), II, 828); Greville, *Journal*, II, 237 (31 Mar.).
21. *Hansard*, LXXIII, 1378 seq.
22. Greville, II, 236 (31 Mar.); *LT*, 30 Mar.
23. Aldam MSS.; see my article, 'The Squire as Businessman' (*Trans. Hunter Arch. Soc.*, VIII, 4: 1961).
24. Fitzwilliam to Bedford, 1 Apr. (Gooch, 70-2); Greville, II, 237 (31 Mar.).
25. Ashley's diary, 23 Mar. (Hodder, II, 35-6); 'Alfred', II, 221.
26. *The THB* (Balme, 23 Mar.); *The Times*, 26, 27, *The Spectator*, 23, *Globe*, 25, *LM*, 23 Mar.
27. *Hansard*, LXXIII, 1482 seq.; Hodder, II, 36.
28. *PP*, 1844, II, 187; *Hansard*, LXXIII, 1667.
29. Grant, 86-9; 'Alfred', II, 221-3.
30. *The Times*, 29 Mar.; *Lord Ashley's Amendment* (Balme, Pollard, 28 Mar.).

31. Walker to Fielden, 19 Nov. (Fielden MSS.); *The Times*, 10, *LI*, 13, *SA*, 19 Apr.; *ILN*, IV, 102 (13 Apr.).
32. *The Times*, 11, 13, *LI*, 13 Apr.
33. Graham to Peel, 3 Dec. 1843 (Graham MSS.).
34. *The Times*, 12, 13, 16 Apr.
35. *HG*, 13, *LM*, *Globe*, 8, *DA*, 26, *DC*, 2 Apr.; *GC*, 26, 28, 30 Mar., 2 Apr.
36. *The THB* (Lawton, 8 Apr.); *The Times*, 16 Apr.; Hodder, II, 41-2.
37. *The Times*, 17, 18, *PC*, *Bolton Free Press*, 20 Apr.
38. *The Times*, 19 Apr.; Mitchell, *passim*; 'Alfred', II, 166-7.
39. *The Times*, 20, 22, *SA*, 26, *Blackburn Standard*, 24 Apr.
40. *The Times*, 4, 19, 25, 27, 29 Apr., 1 May, etc.; *FP*, IV, 14-31 (6 Apr.-3 Aug.).
41. Ashley's diary, 17, 23 Apr. (Hodder, II, 43-4).
42. Smith to Lady Grey, 1 Apr. and between 13 and 22 Apr. (Smith, II, 830, 832).
43. Ashley to Graham, 17 Apr.; *Hansard*, LXXIV, 89, etc.; Hodder, II, 44.
44. *Hansard*, LXXIV, 899 *seq.*; Grant, 104-5.
45. J. Pope-Hennessy: *M. Milnes, The Years of Promise* (1949), 208.
46. *QR*, LXXII, 144 (Sept. 1843); *Hansard*, LXXIV, 1104, 1108.
47. Hodder, II, 50; Holland, 229; 7 and 8 Vict. c. 15.
48. Ashworth to factory delegates, 4 May; *THA*, 12, 20, 21 (12 Dec. 1846, 6, 13 Feb. 1847).
49. Ashley's diary, 16 May (Hodder, II, 50).
50. Engels (Henderson and Chaloner trans.), 198-9; *cf.* 'Alfred', II, 226-7; Grant, 105-6; *DC*, 21 May.
51. Greville (26 May), II, 241-2; Cole, *Chartist Portraits*, 104; Grant, 106-15. *Cf.* Aydelotte, *art. cit.*, who ignores the effects of Peel's threats, and Trevelyan, *Bright*, 157.
52. *The Times*, 23-7, 29, 30, *Standard*, 24-7, *MP*, 24-7, 30, *Atlas*, 27, *Britannia*, 27, *SA*, 26, *HG*, 27 Apr., etc., *ILN*, 24 Apr., 4 May, *Punch*, 4 May, etc.
53. Ferrand, *Mott* (30 May); *The Times*, 30, 31 May, 6 June.
54. *Birmingham Advertiser*, 16, *Birmingham Jour.*, 18 May.
55. Engels to Marx, 19 Nov. (*Marx and Engels on Britain* (Moscow, 1953), 487).
56. (J. Leach): *Stubborn Facts from the Factories* (1844); J. Beckwith: *The Factory Worker's Guide to the Factory Acts* (Leeds, 1844); *FP*, III, 41 (14 Oct. 1843), IV, 9 (2 Mar. 1844); L. Faucher: *Manchester in 1844* (1844), 41.
57. Ashley's diary, 28 Feb. 1846 (Hodder, II, 171).
58. W. C. Taylor: *The Factory System* (1844), 71, etc. (qu. Hutt, in Hayek, 178, 180); R. Torrens: *A Letter to Lord Ashley* (1844).
59. Russell to Parker, 4 Apr. (Gooch, I, 72).
60. *NS*, *The League*, 10 Aug.; Prentice, II, 228 *seq.*; *NS*, 3 Oct. 1840; J. Campbell: *An Examination of the Corn and Provision Laws* (Manchester, 1841), 71; J. Buckley (ed. J. C. Buckmaster): *A Village Politician* (1897), 137; *cf.* D. G. Barnes: *History of the English CLs* (1930), 247; D. Walker-Smith: *The Protectionist Case in the 1840's* (Oxford, 1933), 79-83, and L. Brown: 'The Chartists and the ACLL', in A. Briggs (ed.): *Chartist Studies* (1959), 342-71.
61. Cayley, 12; Almack, 98, 30-52; G. G. Day: *Speech . . .*

- Huntingdon, June 17, 1843 and 27 Jan. 1844 and *Letter to R. Cobden*, 27 Mar. 1844; cf. W. W. Sleight: *Speech . . . Hastings*, 28 Mar. 1844.
62. *The League*, 23 Mar.
63. Ashley to Peel, 18 June (Hodder, II, 55-6).
64. *The Times*, 1, 14, LI, 19, SA, 24 Oct.; later accounts in KN, 6 Apr. 1889, 17 June 1904, 26 May, 11 Aug. 1906, 8 Sept. 1923, *Bingley Herald*, 5 Apr. 1889, YP, 1 Apr. 1889; Whibley, I, 189 n.; Ferrand MSS. Schoyen, 148-9, refers to 'Busby Ferrand'.
65. Walker to Fielden, 1, 18, 19 Nov. (Fielden MSS.).
66. G. J. Holyoake: *The History of the Rochdale Pioneers* (1893), *passim*, and *The History of Co-operation in England . . .* (1879), II, ch. 3; P. Redfern: *The New History of the C.W.S.* (London and Manchester, 1938), 15; Cole, *Co-operation*, 43.
67. Ashley's diary, 17, 19 Oct. (Hodder, II, 72, 75); *BO*, 17 Oct.; *Lord Ashley in Bradford* (report).
68. Ashley to Fielden, 7 Nov. (Fielden MSS.); to Henry Green, 17 Nov. (J. Doherty: *The THB . . .* (Manchester, 1845), 3).
69. Walker to Fielden, 19, Grant to Fielden, 21 Nov. (Fielden MSS.).
70. Ashley's diary, 16, 19, 28 Dec. (Hodder, II, 79-80).
71. *The Times*, 3, 9, 10, 13, MP, 7, 9, LM, 14 Dec.; J. Bright, T. Rogers: *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by R. Cobden, M.P.* (1908), I, 122.
72. *HG*, 7 Dec.
73. *NS*, 1 Mar. 1845; Ashley's diary, 11 Jan. (Hodder, II, 82-5); Howick to Russell, Jan. (Gooch, I, 75-6).
74. Amalg. Assn. of Cotton Spinners' circular, 19 Jan. (S. and B. Webb: *Industrial Democracy* (1897), I, 440).
75. J. Doherty: *The THB. A Letter to the Factory Operatives of Lancashire . . .* (Manchester, 21 Jan.), *passim*.
76. *The Times*, 11, 15, 18 Jan., 22 Feb., 3 Mar., 6 May; *WJ*, 11 Jan.; *ILN*, 15 Feb.
77. Green notice, 28 Feb.; *The Times*, 5 Mar.
78. 'Letter of Mr. R. Gardner of Preston to his workpeople; and a Report of a meeting of his Workpeople . . .', 22 Apr. (*A Selection of Facts and Arguments in favour of the THB . . .* (Manchester, 1845), 53-6); Grant, 121-2.
79. *The THB* (Manchester notice, 21 May); *The THB. To the Factory Operatives of the WR of Yorkshire* (Balme notice, Bradford, 1 Apr.).
80. *PP*, 1845, I, 227; *Hansard*, LXXVII, 638 *seq.*, LXXVIII, 723, 1369 *seq.*, 1439; 8 and 9 Vict. c. 29.
81. *NS*, 1 Mar., 26 Apr., 3 May.
82. Ferrand to Dublin Protestant Operative Society, 3 Apr.; W. B. Ferrand: *Maynooth College Endowment Bill. Speech . . . 18 Apr.* (1845), 6, 11; Raikes, *Journal*, IV, 423 *seq.* (19 Apr.); Greville, II, 278, 280 (6, 22 Apr.).
83. Engels (Henderson and Chaloner trans.), 331, n. 1; K. Marx, F. Engels: *The Communist Manifesto* (1948 ed.), 36.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Hodder, II, 114; *The THB* (Green, Balme notice, 31 May); *The THB. Important Delegated Meeting* (Green report, 12 June); *MH*, 10, *BC*, 14 June.

2. Cowper, 16, Milnes, 26 June, Grey, Howick, 4, Palmerston, 3 July, to Balme.

3. 'Alfred', II, 228-31; Bready, 208-9; Grant, 119-21; Driver, 461-2. 'By this loss Mr. Oastler's services were rendered feeble to the cause', wrote Grant; Bready held that Oastler's 'restraining force was gone; he now lost himself in an abandon of excitement, his better judgment being consumed in the furnace of unbridled emotions . . .' Neither account is a very accurate description of Oastler's subsequent behaviour.

4. BC, 6 Sept.; *Report of Proceedings*. . . .

5. Hodder, II, 115; *The Times*, 16, 23, 25 Oct.

6. MP, 3, *The Times*, 7 Nov.

7. *The THB* (Green notices, 11, 18 Nov.); *A Selection*, *passim*.

8. PP, 1846, VIII; Jordan, *art. cit.*; McCord, 148 *seq.*; F. M. L. Thompson: 'Whigs and Liberals in the WR, 1830-1860' (*English Hist. Rev.*, LXXIV, 281: Apr. 1959).

9. *The Times*, 20 Oct.; Sir D. Le Marchant to Russell, 29 Nov. (Gooch, I, 84).

10. Greville, II, 309 (5 Dec.), 351 (13 Jan.); Grey to Russell, 6 Dec. (Gooch, I, 86).

11. Mullineaux note, 22 Dec. (*A Selection*, 56).

12. Melbourne, 13, Lansdowne, 30 Dec., to Russell (Gooch, I, 88, 99).

13. J. S. Wortley to Lady Wharncliffe, 12, 13 Dec. (Grosvenor, Stuart, II, 352).

14. WJ, 26, MP, *The Times*, LM, 27 Dec.; BC, 3, LM, 7 Jan. 1846; Whibley, I, 197.

15. OR, LXXVIII, 156 (Sept. 1846), 554.

16. BC, 13, 20 Dec.; Ashley to Balme, 12 Dec.; *TH Factory Bill* (Balme note, Dec.).

17. *The Times*, 17 Dec.; Charge to Clergy of Exeter, 1845.

18. SA, 2 Jan. 1846.

19. Tremenhoe's journal, 3 Jan. (Webb, *art. cit.*).

20. SA, 9 Jan.; Denison to Balme, 31 Jan.

21. W. B. Ferrand: *To the Farmers, Operatives and Friends of Native Industry in the WR*, 16 Jan.; *Standard*, 19, *The Times*, 20, SA, 23, *Daily News*, 21 Jan.

22. *The Times*, 25, 30, *Standard*, 21, LI, LM, 24, 31, BO, 29, MP, 31, SA, 30 Jan., etc.

23. Morpeth to WR. STC, 3, to Balme, 16 Jan. (Balme Coll.).

24. *THB! The Electors of the WR* (Bradford, 30 Jan.); HG, 16 May.

25. Balme notice, 26 Jan.

26. *Hansard*, LXXXIII, 378 *seq.*; Hodder, II, 132; Shaftesbury's *Speeches*, 198 *seq.*

27. W. Thornton: *Over-Population and its Remedy* (1846), 399.

28. Ashley's diary, 31 Jan. (Hodder, II, 132); SA, 6 Feb.

29. *The Times*, 8 Feb.; Hodder, II, 134; Balme to Fielden, 6 Feb.

30. A. S. O'Brien: *The Battle for Native Industry* . . . (1846), I, 306, 505-20; W. B. Ferrand: *The CLs. Speech* . . . (1846), 2-20; Prentice, II, 425, 428-9; *The Times*, 25, *Church and State Gazette*, 27, LM, 28 Feb.; *The Times*, 28 Feb., 6 Mar., LM, 7, MG, 11 Mar.

31. *The Times*, 26, 27 Feb.

32. *Ib.* 6, 9, 11, BC, 7, 14, 21, PC, 14, SA, 20, 27 Feb.

33. *BC*, 7, 28 Feb., 14, 21 Mar.; *SA*, 20 Feb., 12 Mar., etc.; *DA*, 3 Mar.
34. Wood to Balme, 21 Feb. (Balme Coll.).
35. *The Times*, 4 seq., *BC*, 7, *SA*, 12 Mar., seq.; *BO*, *LI*, *LM*, *passim*; leaflets; Hodder, II, 135; W. R. W. Stephens, II, 178; C. J. Stranks: *Dean Hook* (1954); Palmerston to Balme, 24 Mar.; *SA*, 2 Apr.; Mullineaux's address, 6 June.
36. *Hansard*, LXXXIV, 349, LXXXVI, 721.
37. Ashley to Lancashire STC, 15, diary, 29 Apr. (Hodder, II, 136); *MG*, 11 Apr.
38. *THB* (Mullineaux circular); *Delegate Meeting* (report).
39. Mullineaux's address, 6 June.
40. *DA*, 13, 27 Feb., 3 Mar.; 'Alfred', II, 235-6.
41. *Hansard*, LXXXV, 1222 seq.; Hodder, II, 137.
42. *SA*, 8, 15, 22 May.
43. *The Factories Bill* (Brewer circular, 11 May).
44. Hardy to Balme, 12 May.
45. *An Address from the Factory Delegates* . . . (Brewer, 15 May); *Hansard*, LXXXVI, 914.
46. *Hansard*, LXXXVI, 1080; 'Alfred', II, 235; *List of Division*; *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. T. B. Macaulay* (1854), 435-55.
47. Ashley to Russell, 25 May (Gooch, I, 108); S. Walpole: *The Life of Lord J. Russell* (1891), I, 473; *List of Division*; *THA*, 12 (12 Dec.); *SA*, 29 May.
48. Ashley to Lancashire STC, 27 May; *An Address to the Factory Operatives of Lancashire* (Mullineaux, 6 June).
49. *The Times*, 8, 10, 13 Aug.
50. 'Alfred', II, 247; Rimmer, *art. cit.*; *HG*, 12 Sept.; *THA*, 26 Sept., 3 Oct.
51. *THA*, 26 Sept., 3, 31 Oct.; *Address to the Factory Operatives of Halifax*, 14 Sept.
52. *SA*, 2, 9, *Standard*, 17, *THA*, 24, 31 Oct.; Morpeth to Balme, 9 Oct.
53. Ashley, 9, Oastler, 10, 12 Oct., to Grant (*THA*, 17, 24 Oct.).
54. *BC*, 24, *THA*, 31 Oct.
55. *THA*, 31 Oct., 14 Nov.
56. *The Times*, 12, 16, *SA*, 20, 27, *THA*, 21 Nov.
57. Pollard to Balme, 11 Nov.; *The Times*, *MP*, *MH*, *passim*; *THA*, 28 Nov., 5, 12 Dec.; *SA*, 27 Nov., 11 Dec.; *HG*, 5 Dec.
58. Oastler, 4, Ashley, 14 Dec., to Grant (*THA*, 12, 19 Dec.).
59. Crabtree to Fielden, 20 Nov. (Fielden MSS.).
60. *The Times*, *Standard*, 25, 27, 28 Nov.; Greville, II, 429 (27 Nov.).
61. *The Times*, *Standard*, 2, *LI*, *BC*, *HG*, 5, *THA*, 5, 12 Dec.
62. 'Alfred', II, 249; Fielden to Edinburgh STC, 21 Dec. (Fielden MSS.).
63. *MG*, 14, 21 Nov., 2 Dec.; *THA*, 21, 28 Nov., 5 Dec.; *SA*, 11 Dec.
64. Mullineaux to Fielden, 19 Nov. (Fielden MSS.).
65. *THA*, 12, 19, 26 Dec., 2 Jan. 1847; *The Times*, 23, *HG*, 5 Dec.
66. *GA*, *EEC*, 14, *Glasgow Constitutional*, *RA*, 12, *THA*, 19 Dec.
67. *RA*, 19, 26, *Glasgow Saturday Post*, 19 Dec., *THA*, 2 Jan. 1847.
68. *DA*, 18, *THA*, 26 Dec.; *The Home*, V, 139 (24 Dec. 1853).
69. *EEC*, 26, 28, 31, *The Times*, 28, 31, Dec.; *THA*, 2, 9 Jan. 1847.
70. *EEC*, 28 Dec.; *The Champion*, I, 10 (12 Jan. 1850); 'Alfred',

II, 250; R. Oastler: *Brougham versus Brougham* (1847), 38-9; Marwick, 153-7.

71. *THA*, 2 Jan. 1847.

72. *ME*, 12, *THA*, 19 Dec.; *THA*, 16, 30 Jan.; *To the Electors of Manchester*, 30 Jan.

73. Mullineaux notices; Hindley letter, 26 Dec.; *BC*, *THA*, 2 Jan.

74. Bury (28 Dec.), Todmorden (Dec.) and Oldham (8 Jan.) addresses.

75. Grant to Fielden, 24, Fielden to Grant, 26 Dec. (Fielden MSS.).

76. *THA*, 16, 23 Jan.

77. *Ib.* 30, *SA*, 29, *MG*, 27, *BC*, 30 Jan., *The Times*, *passim*; 'Alfred', II, 248; Grant, 126-7; Mullineaux to Fielden, 11 Jan. (Fielden MSS.).

78. *THA*, 16, 23, 30 Jan.

79. Oastler to Russell, 13 Jan. (*MP*, 18 Jan.; Oastler, *Brougham*, 29-43), to Hindley, in *THA*, 16 Jan.; Grant, 127.

80. *Hansard*, LXXXIX, 487; *The Times*, 27 Jan., *THA*, 6 Feb.

81. *The TH Factory Bill* (Brewer, Mawdsley, 6 Feb.).

82. *THA*, 6 Feb.-27 Mar.

83. Grant's accounts in Fielden MSS.; Fletcher to Fielden, 7 Feb.

84. Delegates' report, 9, memorial, 13, circular, 15 Feb.

85. *THA*, 13, 20 Feb.; *Return to Address of HC*, 22 Feb.; *THA*, 13 Mar.; *DA*, 16 Feb.

86. *Hansard*, LXXXIX, 1073 *seq.*; *THA*, 13, 20, *BC*, 13 Feb.

87. *Hansard*, XC, 127 *seq.*; *THB*. *Speeches of W. B. Ferrand and J. Brotherton* (Manchester, 1847), 3-18; *The Times*, 18, *Standard*, 16, 18 Feb.

88. *THA*, 27 Feb.; *To the Factory Workers of Halifax* (E. Crabtree, 6 Mar.).

89. *MG*, 17, 20 Feb.; see W. W. Rostow: *British Economy of the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1948), 118-20.

90. *The THB* (Brewer, Mawdsley, 1 Mar.); Fielden MSS.

91. *SA*, 19, *ME*, 27, *M. Courier*, 13, *LI*, 20 Feb.

92. Oastler, *Brougham*, 2 *seq.*; Hodder, II, 190; Russell to Balme, 1 Mar.

93. *THA*, *MG*, 6 Mar.; *Hansard*, XC, 819.

94. *THA*, 20, 27 Mar.; *TH Factory Bill* (Rawson, Balme, 13 Mar.); *The THB* (Mawdsley, Brewer); 'Alfred', II, 255.

95. *Hansard*, XCI, 146; Hodder, II, 190.

96. Russell to Oastler, 20 Mar. (*The Champion*, 21: 30 Mar. 1850).

97. *SA*, 19 Mar.; Ashley *To the STCs*, 18 Mar.; *THA*, 27 Mar.

98. *The Satirist*, *John Bull*, *LT*, *ME*, *MSA*, 20 Mar.; *THA*, 10 Apr.

99. *THA*, 3 Apr.

100. Baines, *Life* (1851), 332; Read, *Press*, 130-2; Hutchins and Harrison, 97; *HG*, 6 Mar.

101. Oastler, *Brougham*, *passim*; *The Times*, *Standard*, 4, 18, 20 May, 25, 26 June, etc.

102. *BC*, 17, 24, *THA*, 24 Apr.; Fielden MSS.

103. *Hansard*, XCI, 1122.

104. *THA*, 1 May.

105. Longley to Hook, 6, Hook to Balme, 7, 12 Apr. (Balme MSS.).

106. *Hansard*, XCII, 306.

107. *THA*, 8, 15, 22 May.
108. *SA*, 7, *M. Courier*, 8, *Standard*, 5, *The Times*, 4, *MSA*, 8, *MH*, 4, *ILN*, 8 May.
109. *Journals of the HL*, LXXIX; *The Times*, 20 May, etc. West, 2, states that Ashley 'guided (the Bill) through the Lords'; on pp. 182, 305 he refers to Dr. Fielden.
110. Hodder, II, 193; *MG*, 19 May.
111. 10 and 11 Vict. c. 29.
112. Circulars; *THA*, 29 May, 5, 12 June; Grant, 142-3; Hodder, II, 195-6.
113. *THA*, 12 June; Grant, 141-2.
114. Balme to Russell, 12, Hon. G. Keppel to Balme, 14, Bull to Balme, 19 July (Balme MSS.).
115. Grant's accounts (Fielden MSS.).
116. Glasgow circular, 19 June (Ferrand MSS.); *LI*, *MSA*, *HG*, *MG*, 5-19 June.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. *ME*, 15 May; *SA*, 4, 11 June 1847.
2. Grant to Fielden, 20 Aug. (Fielden MSS.).
3. *HG*, 11, 18 Sept., 9 Oct.; *M. Courier*, 22 Sept., 6 Oct. Cf. G. H. Wood: 'Factory Legislation, considered with reference to the Wages, etc., of the Operatives protected thereby' (*Jour. Royal Statistical Soc.*, 1902): 'The "Ten Hours Act" caused a slight reduction of earnings, but . . . this reduction was only temporary'.
4. *ILN*, 30 Oct.; *M. Courier*, 23 Oct., 1 Dec.
5. *PP*, 1847-8, XXVI, 111.
6. 7 and 8 Vict. c. 15, secs. 26, 28, 32, 36; *PP*, 1847-8, XXVI, 119.
7. Grant to Fielden, 6, Ashley to Fielden, 11, Fielden to Ashley and Grant, 12 Dec. (Fielden MSS.).
8. Report, 30 Apr. 1848 (*PP*, 1847-8, XXVI, 194).
9. Oastler, 17, Ashley (two letters), 14 Dec., to Fielden (Fielden MSS.); *HG*, 24 Dec.
10. Mullineaux, 22, Crabtree, 25 Dec., to Fielden (Fielden MSS.).
11. Mullineaux to Fielden, 3 Jan. 1848 (Fielden MSS.).
12. J. S. Mill: *Principles of Political Economy* (1909 ed.), 751; A. Alison: *Essays* . . . (Edinburgh, 1850), III, 249.
13. T. W. Reid: *Life of W. E. Forster* (1888), I, 247.
14. *HG*, 6 May; Oastler to Lt.-Col. W. L. Maberley, 9 Feb. (LUL); *AC*, 2, 10 (1 Apr., 22 July).
15. *PP*, 1847-8, XXVI, 159, 202, 151; *PP*, 1849, XXII, 225.
16. *AC*, 32 (20 Jan. 1849); Marx, *Capital*, 291.
17. *AC*, 4 (29 Apr.), 8 (24 June).
18. Ashley to Fielden, 31 Mar. (Fielden MSS.).
19. Hindley to Fielden, 15, Fielden to Hindley, 17, to Ashley, 18, Grant to Fielden, 24 Apr., Hindley to Fielden, 1, 8 May (Fielden MSS.).
20. 'Alfred', II, 285; Grant, 145-6.
21. Mullineaux to Fielden, 3 May (Fielden MSS.); Oastler, *Address*, 5, 13, 29 June, 6, 15, 20, 28 July, 27 Sept.
22. S. Auty: *The Blue Book of British Manufacturers* (Bradford, 1848); *Labour League*, 26 Aug., 2 Sept., 25 Nov., 2 Dec.
23. *AC*, 9, 10, 11-13, 17 (8, 22 July, 5, 19 Aug., 2 Sept., 7 Oct.).
24. Mullineaux, 3, Ireland, 22 May to Fielden (Fielden MSS.).

25. *PP*, 1847-8, XXVI, 202, LI, 244; *PP*, 1849, XXII, 134.
26. *AC*, 23 (18 Nov.); Oastler to Cobden, 30 Oct. (R. Oastler : *Reply to R. Cobden's Speech at Leeds* . . . (1850), 3).
27. *LM*, 7 Oct.; *AC*, 27, 28 (16, 23 Dec.).
28. *AC*, 28, 29, 33 (23, 30 Dec., 27 Jan. 1849); *PP*, 1849, XII, 144; Grant to Fielden, 19 Oct. (Fielden MSS.).
29. *MH*, 8, *M. Courier*, 10 Jan. 1849; *Revival of the Agitation of a THB* (report).
30. *AC*, 31 (13 Jan.).
31. *M. Courier*, 17 Jan.; *AC*, 32 (20 Jan.).
32. *PP*, 1849, XXII, 260 *seq.*, 281, 286-7; *AC*, 31, 33 (13, 27 Jan.).
33. *AC*, 34 (3 Feb.); *cf. The Times*, 9 Jan., 14, 22 Feb., *Labour League*, 10 Mar.
34. *M. Courier*, 3, 10 Feb.; *AC*, 36, 37 (17, 24 Feb.); *Oastler's Manifesto on the Factory Question* (report).
35. *AC*, 35, 36, 40, 43 (10, 17 Feb., 17 Mar., 7 Apr.).
36. Ashley to Fielden, 7 Feb. (Fielden MSS.).
37. *M. Courier*, 14, *ME*, 24 Feb.; Ashley's diary, 5 Mar. (Hodder, II, 198); Oastler to *MP*, *qu. HG*, 31 Mar., *AC*, 43 (7 Apr.).
38. Fielden letters, 17 Mar. and *To the Factory Workers*, 20 Mar.; *The Times*, 29 Mar.
39. Walker to Fielden, 17 Feb. (Fielden MSS.).
40. *AC*, 45, 46 (21, 28 Apr.); *M. Courier*, 11, 14 Apr.
41. *AC*, 39, 42, 43, 48 (10, 31 Mar., 7 Apr., 12 May).
42. Grant, 19, Hindley, 27 Feb., to Fielden (Fielden MSS.).
43. Grant to Fielden, 7, 17 Mar. (Fielden MSS.); on other votes, see *MG*, 4 July.
44. Ashley to Grant, 9 Mar. (Fielden MSS.).
45. *TH Act: Speech of C. Hindley* . . . *Together with a Report* . . . (1849), 11, 21, 23-32; *MG*, 18 Apr.
46. *AC*, 50 (26 May).
47. *MG*, 13 June; Inspectors' report, 12 June (*PP*, 1849, XXII, 346); *HG*, 16 June.
48. Ashley's diary, 8 June (Hodder, II, 198); *MG*, 20 June.
49. *AC*, *M. Courier*, *passim*.
50. *AC*, 55 (30 June).
51. *AC*, 56, 57, 59 (7, 14, 28 July); *HG*, 14 July; *Mr. Oastler at Todmorden* (report).
52. *Protection of the TH Act. Report* . . . (Manchester, 1849), 1-24; *M. Courier*, 14 July; *AC*, 58 (21 July).
53. *HG*, 14 July.
54. *AC*, 58, 59 (21, 28 July).
55. *AC*, 60-65 (4 Aug.-8 Sept.); Grant, 149-50.
56. Ashley to Haigh, 3 Aug. (*AC*, 63: 25 Aug.); *M. Courier*, 28 July.
57. *To the Operatives and Resolutions*; *AC*, 66, 68 (15, 29 Sept.).
58. *AC*, 64-6 (1-15 Sept.); *MP*, 6 Sept.
59. *AC*, 66-8, 71 (15-29 Sept., 20 Oct.).
60. *AC*, 67, 71, 73 (22 Sept., 20 Oct., 3 Nov.); *Address of the Association* . . . (Mallalieu, Oct.); *Rules of the Association*. . .
61. *AC*, 67-9, 71-3 (22 Sept.-3 Nov.).
62. *AC*, 71, 72 (20, 27 Oct.).
63. Ashley's diary, 4 Oct., 1 Nov. (Hodder, II, 198). Published accounts of the Movement's divisions are generally unsatisfactory. Ashley's biographers ignore or minimise his lack of candour and compromise suggestions, contrasting his superior Parliamentary

knowledge with Oastler's 'violence' (Bready, 233-6; Hodder, II, 197-8; Hammonds, 137-8, who misdate the founding of the Fielden Society as March). Grant forgot his own strike threats and attacked the 'violent' Oastler.

64. *The Champion of What is True and Right and for the Good of All*: I, 26 weekly issues, 10 Nov. 1849-4 May 1850; II, 26 undated issues.

65. *Ib.* I, 1, 2 (10, 17 Nov.). The most complete account of this phase of the agitation is Driver's; but he did not use all the sources. Evidence from Mawdsley's group, with some omissions, has usually been accepted.

66. Manners to Granby, 18 Dec.; Oastler to Manners, Dec. (Whibley, II, 26-7).

67. *The Working Men Are Thinking*. R. Oastler's Address . . . (1850), 2, 3; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 4 Mar.; *The Champion*, I, 24-5 (20, 27 Apr.).

68. *ILN*, 12 Jan.; *The Champion*, I, 10-12 (12-26 Jan.).

69. Oastler, *Reply*, (19 Jan. 1850), *Free Trade Not Proven* (1849); *The Champion*, I, 1-3, 7-9, 14 (10 Nov.-29 Dec. 1849, 5 Jan., 9 Feb. 1850).

70. S. Fielden: *To the Delegates assembled at the Cotton Tree Tavern*, 13 Jan.

71. *The Champion*, I, 11-13 (19 Jan.-2 Feb.); *HG*, 29 Jan.

72. Horner's report, 31 Oct. 1849 (*PP*, 1850, XXIII, 193).

73. *The Champion*, I, 1 (10 Nov. 1849).

74. Ashley's diary, 1 Feb. 1850 (Hodder, II, 199).

75. *Judgment delivered* . . . *Ryder v. Mills*; *The Times*, 9 Feb.; *The Champion*, I, 18 (9 Mar.). G. D. H. Cole and R. Postgate: *The Common People, 1746-1946* (1949 ed.), 314-15, rather oddly comment that 'the decision was a shabby lawyer's trick; but it was valid . . .'.

76. *The Times*, 11, 14 Feb.; Ashley's diary, 15 Feb. (Hodder, II, 199); *Hansard*, CVIII, 712.

77. Horner to Mary Horner, 23 Feb. (Lyell, II, 158).

78. *The Times*, 18, BC, 16 Feb.; *The TH Act Defeated* (Mawdsley circular, 11 Feb.).

79. Mawdsley to Ashley, 11 Feb. Bready, 239, n. 1, is mistaken in thinking that 'this conference was organised by Sam Fielden, without Ashley's knowledge'.

80. Ashley to Mawdsley, 15 Feb.; *The Times*, 20 Feb.

81. *The TH Act Defeated* (Mawdsley, 15 Feb.). This and other Mawdsley papers bore the imprint of the 'Central Committee for the Protection of the THA', which Bready, 240-1, thinks was under Fielden's control; it was, in fact, the old Lancashire Central Committee.

82. *The Times*, *passim*; *BC*, 16 Feb.; leaflets; *TH Act* (Balme circular, Feb.); *The Champion*, I, 19 (16 Mar.); *Democratic Rev.*, Mar. 1850.

83. *The Champion*, I, 15 (16 Feb.).

84. *Ib.* I, 16 (23 Feb.).

85. *The Times*, *MG*, 20, *HG*, *M. Courier*, *The Champion*, 23 Feb.; *Report* . . .; Bready, 239-41, alleges that this conference did not properly represent the STCs and was 'packed' by Fielden.

86. *MG*, 27 Feb., *HG*, *M. Courier*, 2 Mar. Bready, 239, thinks that this meeting was attended by 'officially appointed delegates', as opposed to only 'nominally' representative delegates at the first conference.

87. *To the STCs of Great Britain and Ireland* (Mawdsley, 28 Feb.).
88. Oastler to Stalybridge STC, 6, Halifax STC, 14 Mar. (*The Champion*, I, 19, 20: 16, 23 Mar.).
89. S. Fielden: *The TH Act. To the Delegates* . . . (27 Feb.).
90. *LM*, 2 Mar.; *The Champion*, I, 17 (2 Mar.).
91. *The Champion*, I, 18 (9 Mar.); *MG*, *M. Courier*, 2, *BC*, 2, 9 Mar.; Oastler to Ashton STC, 2, to Stalybridge STC, 6 Mar.
92. *Re-Assembly of Factory Delegates* . . . (report); Fielden memorial, 2 Mar.; *MG*, 6, *HG*, *BC*, 9 Mar.; *The Champion*, I, 18 (9 Mar.).
93. *To the Factory Operatives* (Grant, 7 Mar.).

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. *Preston Guardian*, 16 Mar.; *The TH Act and the Relay System* (Preston, 1850), 1-24.
2. Posters, *The Champion*, *HG*, *passim*; *To the TH Committees* (Balme, 27 Mar.).
3. *Hansard*, CIX, 883 *seq.*, 1089; *PP*, 1850, III, 1.
4. Cobbett to Ashley, 12, 13, 21, Ashley reply, 22 Mar. Cobbett explained these complicated manœuvres in the *Manchester Spectator* (qu. *The Champion*, II, 24-5).
5. *The Champion*, I, 20 (23 Mar.); *MG*, 20 Mar.
6. Ashley's diary, 11, 14 Mar. (Hodder, II, 201).
7. *To the STCs* (Mawdsley, 21 Mar.); Grant leaflet, London, 26 Mar.
8. *PP*, 1850, III, 5.
9. *The Champion*, I, 22, 23, 24 (6-20 Apr.); *Manchester Spectator*, 30 Mar.
10. Cobbett to Ashley, 2, 14, Ashley to Cobbett, 13 Apr.; Peacock to Cobbett, 15 Apr.
11. *The Champion*, I, 22, 23, 26 (6, 13 Apr., 4 May), II, 2, 4, 6, 17; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 25 Mar.
12. *The Champion*, II, 24-5; *MH*, 19 July.
13. *MG*, *The Times*, 27 Apr.
14. *The Champion*, I, 26 (4 May), II, 1, 3, 4, 6, 8; see F. E. Gillespie: *Labour and Politics in England, 1850-67* (Durham, N.C., 1927), 64-5.
15. *The Times*, 30 Apr., 3 May; *Hansard*, CX, 1133-4.
16. *The Times*, 6, 8 May; *MG*, 8 May; *The Home*, II, 43 (21 Feb. 1852).
17. Ashley's diary, 7-9 May (Hodder, II, 201-2); *The Times*, 9, *MG*, *M. Courier*, 11 May; Hodder, II, 208.
18. Pitt circular, 8 May. Bready, 249, affirms that the delegates unanimously supported Ashley; he also misnames Balme 'Blake'.
19. *TH Act. Delegate Meeting in Bradford* (report); *The Times*, 14, *HG*, 18 May.
20. John Sunderland to Ashley, 11 May (leaflet); *HG*, 18 May.
21. *The Times*, 14, *MG*, 18 May.
22. Oastler to *The Times*, 9 May (*The Champion*, II, 2); *The Home*, II, 43 (21 Feb. 1852); Oastler to Mills, 11 May (*The Champion*, II, 3).
23. *The Champion*, II, 2; *The Times*, 9, 10, *MG*, 11, 22 May.
24. *PP*, 1850, III, 9; *The Times*, 14 May; Oastler to Mills, 15 May (*The Champion*, II, 4); Oastler to STCs, 25 May (*ib.* II, 5).

25. Manners to Balme, 18 May (Balme Coll.).
26. *MG*, *The Times*, 29 May; *HG*, 1 June; Holyoake, *Stephens*, 99.
27. *Hansard*, CXI, 846-55, 1240.
28. *MG*, 6 June, etc. Bready, 255, strangely comments that 'the workers' rejection of Ashley postponed by three years complete abandonment of shifts and relays'.
29. Rawson poster, 6, Balme, 10, *LI*, 15, *BO*, 13 June; printed reports and motions.
30. Manners to Balme, 10 June (Balme Coll.); Hurst circular 13 June; *Hansard*, CXI, 1283; *The Champion*, II, 7.
31. *The TH Factory Act* (Balme, 18 June); Feversham to Balme, 21 June (Balme Coll.).
32. Richmond, 21, Oxford, 27 June, to Balme (Balme Coll.).
33. *The Champion*, II, 8-10.
34. *Factory Bill* . . . *Speech of the Bishop of Ripon*; *The Times*, 16 July; 13 and 14 Vict. c. 54.
35. *The Champion*, II, 12; Oastler to Robert Wilkinson, 18 July; Fielden to Avison, 26 July; *The Factory Bill. Delegated Meeting* (Avison report, 3 Aug.).
36. *HG*, 3 Aug.
37. Avison and Mawdsley leaflets; Fielden to Avison, 16 Aug. (*The Champion*, II, 17).
38. *The TH Act and No Surrender* (Mawdsley, 26 Aug.) and accounts; *Manchester Spectator*, 17 Aug.
39. *PP*, 1850, XXIII, 265, 1851, XXIII, 219.
40. *PP*, 1850, XLII, 477; *The Champion*, II, 14.
41. *The Champion*, II, 19, 22, 24, 25; *Manchester Spectator*, 21 Sept.
42. Ashley's diary, 25 Dec. 1851 (Hodder, II, 357); *ib.* 207.
43. *The Times*, 28, 30, *Standard*, 30 Mar., etc.; Oastler to Ferrand, 31 Aug. (*The Champion*, II, 19); *Lincolnshire Herald*, 1 Aug.; *Hereford Times*, *LI*, 14 Sept.; *NS*, 23 Nov.
44. R. Oastler: *Free Trade and Peel's Monument* (26 Aug.).
45. Grant, 152; Clegg, 96; Scholes, 522; *Ashton Weekly Reporter*, 14 Feb. 1857.
46. Clegg, 97; Scholes, 522; *LI*, 1 Aug. 1863; Bull to William McWeeny, 29 May, Hook to Burnett, 9 June 1863 (Balme Coll.).
47. *The Home*, I, 1 (3 May 1851): 218 issues in 8 vols., to 30 June 1855. Slosson, 208, misnames it 'Altar, Throne and Cottage' (its sub-title); Croft, 2, calls it 'The Hour'. Kydd was an Arbroath shoemaker who became a Chartist lecturer, journalist and barrister.
48. *The Home*, I, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10-13, 17, 19 (10, 17 May, 14, 21 June, 5-26 July, 23 Aug., 6 Sept.).
49. Shaftesbury to Russell, 16 Oct. (Gooch, I, 212).
50. *Violation of the Factories Act. Report* . . . (Manchester, 1851); *MG*, 10 Dec.
51. *The Home*, II, 37-42 (10 Jan.-14 Feb. 1852), 48 (27 Mar.); J. B. Horsfall to Oastler, 15 Jan. 1852 (*ib.* II, 44: 28 Feb.).
52. *The TH Factory Bill. Address* (21 Mar.); *The Home*, III, 69-72 (21 Aug.-11 Sept.).
53. *The Home*, II, 47, 49-59 (20 Mar., 3 Apr.-12 June); Oastler to Robert Holmes, 21 Apr. (*ib.* 53: 1 May).
54. W. B. Ferrand: 'Letters to the Duke of Newcastle', 8, 12, 16, 19, 22, 24 Jan. (*The Home*, II, 44-III, 67).
55. Manners to Ferrand, 31 May (Ferrand MSS.); Oastler to

Wilkinson, 17 Apr.; Wilkinson reply, 12, Hinchcliffe, 10 May; poster *Halifax Election*.

56. Tim Bobbin to Oastler, 24 June; *The Home*, III, 62, 63, 65 (3, 10, 24 July); *Preston Guardian*, 12 June; Oastler to Auty, 1 July.

57. *The Home*, III, 73, IV, 92 (18 Sept., 29 Jan. 1853); *To the Delegates* (20 Aug.).

58. *The Home*, III, 75-86 (2 Oct.-18 Dec.), IV, 88-9 (1, 8 Jan. 1853); *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 16 Oct.

59. Bull to Holmes, 27 Sept.; *The Home*, III, 76 (9 Oct.), IV, 95 (19 Feb. 1853).

60. *The Home*, IV, 93 (5 Feb. 1853).

61. *Ib.* IV, 96-104 (26 Feb.-23 Apr. 1853); *M. Courier*, PC, 11 Dec.

62. *Labour League . . . Principles*, 6, *Address*, 15 Dec.; *The Home*, IV, 88, 112 (1 Jan., 18 June 1853).

63. *The Home*, IV, 89, 103 (8 Jan., 16 Apr. 1853).

64. *BC*, 22 Jan.; Speake and Whitty, 90; *Report . . . Over Darwen* (Manchester, 1853); *HG*, 9 Apr.; *The Home*, *passim*.

65. *HG*, 16 Apr.; Oastler to Demain, 22, reply, 27 Apr.; *The Home*, IV, 106-7 (7, 14 May).

66. Joseph Hill to Oastler, 25, reply, 30 Apr.; *The Home*, IV, 108, 109 (21, 28 May).

67. *HG*, 18 June; *The Home*, V, 116 (16 July).

68. *The Times*, 7 July; *The Home*, V, 118 (30 July); W. A. Wilkinson to Royton STC, 13 July; *MG*, 13 July.

69. *Hansard*, CXXVIII, 1255 *seq.*; *MG*, 9, *SA*, 8, 22 July; *The Home*, V, 116-32 (16 July-5 Nov.); *People's Paper*, 13 Aug.; *TH Act. A Corrected Report of the Debate* (1853), 4-32.

70. 16 and 17 Vict. c. 104.

71. Oastler to Auty, 14, 22 Aug. (BRL).

72. *Labour League Address*, 4 Aug.; Auty to Oastler, 12 Aug.; *The Home*, V, 121-3 (20 Aug.-3 Sept.).

73. *The Home*, V, 126 (24 Sept.) *seq.*; *SA*, 28 Oct., etc.

74. *People's Paper*, 8, 15 Oct.

75. Clemesha, 220-6; *The Home*, V, 131, 133, etc.; *SA*, 28, *MG*, 29 Oct.; *Preston Guardian*, *passim*; *Household Words*, 11 Feb. 1854.

76. *The Home*, *passim*; Burroughs' *Address*, 25 Oct.; *People's Paper*, 8 Oct.

77. *BC*, 24 Sept.; *The Home*, V, 134 (19 Nov.).

78. *The Home*, V, 127 (1 Oct.); *People's Paper*, 8 Oct.

79. *The Home*, VI, 152, 153 (25 Mar., 1 Apr. 1854); *Standard*, 16 Mar.

80. *The Home*, VI, 163, 164, 169 (10, 17 June, 22 July); *The Times*, 8 July.

81. *PP*, 1854-5, XV, 423, 427.

82. *The Home*, VIII, 197, 198, 202 (3, 10 Feb., 10 Mar. 1855); *Carlisle Patriot*, 16 Dec. 1854.

83. H. Martineau: *The Factory Controversy . . .* (Manchester, 1855), *passim*; *The Economist*, 10 Mar.; *HG*, 24, 31 Mar., 21 Apr.

84. *The Home*, VIII, 211-14 (12 May-2 June); *Household Words*, XI, 264, 268, 274, 279 (14 Apr., 12 May, 23 June, 28 July).

85. *Factory Legislation. Refuted Predictions . . .* (Manchester, 1855), *Opinions of Millowners . . .* (Manchester, 1855); R. Baker: *The Factory Acts Made Easy* (Leeds, 1854).

86. *Hansard*, CXXXVII, *passim*; *Substance of the Debate . . .* (1855); *The Home*, VIII, 205, 207 (31 Mar., 14 Apr.).

87. Martineau, iv, 14, 37, 44-5, 50; R. H. Greg: *The NAFO: Special Report* . . . (Manchester, July 1855), 3, 6-7, 13. See R. K. Webb: *H. Martineau* (1960), 210-25, 346-7.
88. R. Oastler: *Factory Legislation. A Letter* . . . (13 Oct.), 7, 10-14, 15.
89. *HG*, 16 Feb. 1856; 19 and 20 Vict. c. 38; *PP*, 1857, III, 561.
90. *The Times*, 9 May 1860; 23 and 24 Vict. c. 78.
91. *The Times*, 22 Mar. 1860; Hodder, II, 205, 206.
92. G. S. Bull: *R. Oastler. A Sermon* . . . (Bradford, 1861), 12, 16.
93. *Hansard*, CLXXXV, *passim*.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. *TH Act* . . . *Report of the Delegates* . . . (1849), 23-8; *Church of England QR*, XXVII, 2 (Apr. 1850).
2. Shaftesbury to Russell, 26 Nov. 1851 (Gooch, I, 214).
3. *PP*, 1849, XXII, 144 *seq.* For an analysis of the answers, see N. J. Smelser: *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (1959), 304-12.
4. P. A. Whittle: *Blackburn As It Is* (Preston, 1852), 32.
5. *The Times*, 7 Sept. 1861.
6. Hodder, II, 210.
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45. *MG*, 10 Mar. 1832; Fielden, *Curse*, 17; *cf.* Smelser, ch. 11.

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48. 'Alfred', II, 79.

49. Sir G. Douglas, Sir G. D. Ramsay: *The Panmure Papers* (1908), 15.

50. *The League*, 23 Mar. 1844; Holyoake, *Sixty Years*, 85.

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52. Ashley's diary, 9 May 1850 (Hodder, II, 202); *New York Daily Tribune*, 15 Mar. 1853.

53. See Trevelyan, *Bright*, 74, 154-9, *English Social History* (1956), 542; Morley, *Cobden*, 301; Court, 238; Halevy, 111, 340; Gregg, 125; Hutchins and Harrison, 61-2, 87; E. L. Woodward: *The Age of Reform* (Oxford, 1949 ed.), 148; A. D. Gayer, W. W. Rostow, A. J. Schwarz: *The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790-1850* (Oxford, 1953), I, 340.

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55. Aydelotte, *art. cit.*, regards Protectionist support in 1847 as 'a sudden conversion'; *cf.* D. Roberts: 'Tory Paternalism and Social Reform in Early Victorian England' (*American Hist. Rev.*, LXIII, 2: Jan. 1958), who minimises Tory work, ascribes the Act to Whig action, helped by 'rural Tories', and lists Hardy as a Radical.

56. Hodder, II, 209.

57. *The League*, 13 June 1846; *DA*, 26 May 1846.

58. *QR*, XC (Mar. 1852), 502. On Sibthorp, see C. Sykes: 'Colonel Sibthorp: A Festival Centenary' (*HT*, I, 5: May 1951).

59. *The TH Factory Question*; *MSA*, 8, 15, *MG*, 15 Jan. 1842; Pinchbeck, *passim*.

60. Greg, *Factory Question*, 20; Taylor, *Factories and the Factory System*, 97.

61. A. V. Dicey: *Law and Public Opinion in England* (1948 ed.), 224.

62. See R. G. Cowherd: *The Humanitarians and the TH Movement in England* (Boston, Mass., 1956), *passim*.

63. See my articles, 'Bradford and Factory Reform' (*Jour.*

Bradford Textile Soc., 1960-61) and 'Leeds and the Factory Reform Movement' (*Thoresby Soc. Pub.*, XLVI, 2: 1961).

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66. *PP*, 1840, XXIII, 32; Greg, *Factory Question*, 129.

67. See Thomas, 106-13; Mather, 185-7.

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PRINCIPAL MANUSCRIPT AND OTHER COLLECTIONS

Matthew Balme Collection

'Ten Hours Bill Movement Papers' and Balme's correspondence, in Bradford City Reference Library.

J. M. Cobbett Collection

'Factory Pamphlets, 1832-56', one volume in London University Library.

W. B. Ferrand Manuscripts, etc.

Letters, MSS., reports, etc., relating to W. B. Ferrand, twelve volumes in the possession of the late Colonel G. W. Ferrand.

'Letters from Lord John Manners to W. Ferrand, 1845-1890', one volume in the possession of the late Colonel G. W. Ferrand.

'Fragments relating to the History of Bingley Parish and its Families', by J. A. Busfield, three MS. volumes in the possession of Mr. D. F. Ferrand.

W. B. Ferrand's diaries in the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's Library, Leeds, and papers in the Cartwright Memorial Museum, Bradford.

Sir James Graham Manuscripts

Correspondence of Sir James Graham, c. 1820-1860, in the possession of Sir Fergus Graham, Bt., here used from microfilmed copies in Cambridge University Library.

Fielden Manuscripts

Correspondence, etc., of John Fielden and Samuel Fielden, here used from transcripts made by Professor David Owen.

Richard Oastler Collection

'White Slavery' Collection, sixteen volumes of pamphlets in the Goldsmiths' Library, London University, and six volumes in the Columbia University Library, New York (from which several photographed reproductions are used by courtesy of Canon J. C. Gill).

University of London Collection of Broad-sides, Vol. VI, 1818-68.

University of London Collection of Broad-sides, 'Oastler and the Factory Movement, 1830-35', two volumes.

'White Slavery. Oastler's Letters and Cuttings', in London University Library.

Other Oastler papers are listed in the text.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AC:</i>	<i>Ashton Chronicle.</i>
<i>ACLL:</i>	<i>Anti-Corn Law League.</i>
<i>A and D:</i>	<i>Argus and Demagogue.</i>
<i>AHR:</i>	<i>American Historical Review.</i>
<i>AJ:</i>	<i>Aberdeen Journal.</i>
<i>Ann. Reg.:</i>	<i>Annual Register.</i>
<i>BC:</i>	<i>Bolton Chronicle.</i>
<i>BH:</i>	<i>Bradford Herald.</i>
<i>BLP:</i>	<i>British Labourer's Protector.</i>
<i>BO:</i>	<i>Bradford Observer.</i>
<i>BRL:</i>	<i>Bradford Reference Library.</i>
<i>(C)HJ:</i>	<i>(Cambridge) Historical Journal.</i>
<i>CL:</i>	<i>Corn Laws.</i>
<i>CP:</i>	<i>Complete Peerage.</i>
<i>CSU:</i>	<i>Complete Suffrage Union.</i>
<i>DA:</i>	<i>Dundee Advertiser.</i>
<i>DC:</i>	<i>Dundee Courier.</i>
<i>DNB:</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography.</i>
<i>EcHR:</i>	<i>Economic History Review.</i>
<i>EEC</i>	<i>Edinburgh Evening Courant.</i>
<i>EH:</i>	<i>Economic History.</i>
<i>EJ:</i>	<i>Economic Journal.</i>
<i>ER:</i>	<i>Edinburgh Review.</i>
<i>FP:</i>	<i>Fleet Papers.</i>
<i>GA:</i>	<i>Glasgow Argus.</i>
<i>GC:</i>	<i>Glasgow Courier.</i>
<i>Hansard:</i>	<i>Parliamentary Debates (3rd Series, unless otherwise stated).</i>
<i>HC:</i>	<i>House of Commons.</i>
<i>HCC:</i>	<i>Halifax Commercial Chronicle.</i>
<i>HG:</i>	<i>Halifax Guardian.</i>
<i>HHE:</i>	<i>Halifax and Huddersfield Express.</i>
<i>HL:</i>	<i>House of Lords.</i>
<i>HLW:</i>	<i>Hand-loom weaver.</i>
<i>HO:</i>	<i>Home Office.</i>
<i>HRI:</i>	<i>Herald of the Rights of Industry.</i>
<i>HRL:</i>	<i>Huddersfield Reference Library.</i>
<i>HT:</i>	<i>History Today.</i>
<i>ILN:</i>	<i>Illustrated London News.</i>
<i>KN:</i>	<i>Keighley News.</i>
<i>LCJ:</i>	<i>Leeds Conservative Journal.</i>
<i>LD:</i>	<i>London Democrat.</i>
<i>LG:</i>	<i>Landed Gentry.</i>
<i>LI:</i>	<i>Leeds Intelligencer.</i>

LM:	<i>Leeds Mercury.</i>
LP:	<i>Leeds Patriot.</i>
LRL:	Leeds Reference Library.
LT:	<i>Leeds Times.</i>
LUL:	London University Library.
MC:	<i>Morning Chronicle.</i>
M. Courier:	<i>Manchester Courier.</i>
ME:	<i>Manchester Examiner.</i>
MG:	<i>Manchester Guardian.</i>
MH:	<i>Morning Herald.</i>
MP:	<i>Morning Post.</i>
MRL:	Manchester Reference Library.
MSA:	<i>Manchester and Salford Advertiser.</i>
MT:	<i>Manchester Times.</i>
NCA:	National Charter Association.
NL:	<i>Northern Liberator.</i>
NMW:	<i>New Moral World.</i>
NPL:	New Poor Law.
NRS:	National Regeneration Society.
NS:	<i>Northern Star.</i>
NSA:	New (Second) <i>Statistical Account of Scotland.</i>
OSA:	Old (First) <i>Statistical Account of Scotland.</i>
PC:	<i>Preston Chronicle.</i>
PL:	Poor Law.
PMA:	<i>Poor Man's Advocate.</i>
PMG:	<i>Poor Man's Guardian.</i>
PP:	<i>Parliamentary Papers.</i>
PR:	<i>Political Register.</i>
QR:	<i>Quarterly Review.</i>
RA:	<i>Renfrewshire Advertiser.</i>
SA:	<i>Stockport Advertiser.</i>
SHR:	<i>Scottish Historical Review.</i>
SMM:	<i>Stephens' Monthly Magazine.</i>
ST(C):	Short Time (Committee).
TD:	<i>Twopenny Dispatch.</i>
THA:	<i>Ten Hours Advocate.</i>
THAS:	<i>Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society.</i>
TH(B):	Ten Hours (Bill).
UPCI:	<i>Union Pilot and Co-operative Intelligencer.</i>
UTCJ:	<i>United Trades Co-operative Journal.</i>
VP:	<i>Voice of the People.</i>
VS:	<i>Victorian Studies.</i>
VWR:	<i>Voice of the West Riding.</i>
W(H/D)J:	<i>Wakefield (and Halifax/Dewsbury) Journal.</i>
WMF:	<i>Working Man's Friend.</i>
WPG:	<i>Weekly Police Gazette.</i>
WR:	West Riding.
YAS:	Yorkshire Archaeological Society.
Y(E)P:	<i>Yorkshire (Evening) Post.</i>

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